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*Great Britain and the Empire*

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GREAT BRITAIN AND  
THE EMPIRE

*A Discursive History*

*by*

JAMES A. WILLIAMSON

ADAM & CHARLES BLACK  
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# GREAT BRITAIN AND THE EMPIRE

## I

### THE FORMATIVE CENTURIES

#### 1. *The Fusion of the Peoples*

EUROPE has an exceptional climate among the larger regions of the world, a climate that has bred some exceptionally competent types of mankind. Some of the most able, intelligent and morally responsible among them have sent their representatives as immigrants into the British Isles from the days before recorded history until about a thousand years ago. Since then, since, namely, the tenth century after Christ, the process has ceased, with some numerically trifling exceptions, and the implanted stocks have fused into a composite British nationality comprising English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish elements. The four national elements are indeed distinct in their modern habits of thought and conceptions of themselves, but by origin they are all mixtures in different proportions of the same racial elements deriving from the continent.

Omitting the wandering hunters of the old stone age and the first peoples of the neolithic period that followed it (concerning whose racial affinities nothing is really known), the earliest established fact is the arrival of immigrants who came from the Mediterranean by way of the Spanish peninsula, and are consequently known as the Iberian race. They overspread the country and absorbed any pre-existent stocks, and their physical type is still represented throughout the British Isles—that of the short, dark person of spare build and long, narrow skull. The Iberians followed the Biscay coast of France and made an open-sea passage from Brittany to Cornwall. Thence they tended to expand rather northwards than eastwards, and their monuments are to be found chiefly in the western half of Great Britain—Druid stones so-called, dolmens and the great stone circles

of Stonehenge and Avebury; for the Iberians attained a civilization capable of large communal undertakings.

Upon them impinged, still in undatable pre-history, a race who came from the east across the North Sea. These people were, many of them, round-skulled and of larger build, belonging in some respects to the type called Alpine which is common in south-central Europe. The newcomers were probably the first wave of the Celtic invaders. Their language superseded that of the Iberians, who were themselves absorbed. The amalgamated society of Ancient Britons was in process of formation. None of these old immigrations should be thought of as invasions achieving success in a military campaign. They were rather infiltrations spread over decades and centuries. The early Celtic arrivals seem to have introduced tools and weapons of bronze in place of the Iberians' stone implements.

A third outstanding immigration was that of the iron-using Celts in the last five centuries before Christ. The bronze-users had been by no means exclusively round-skulled, and the type changed steadily towards that of the long skull. The last of these immigrants were the people whom Caesar called the Belgae and whose characteristics he described. They had overrun south-eastern England only about a hundred years before his time. Behind the westward-moving Celts overspreading Europe was another flood of migrants called the Teutons, some of whom pushed through and intermingled with the Celts. The Belgae seem to have represented such a fusion. Their language was Celtic and so were some of their ways of life, but others were Teutonic. They may be regarded as of the Nordic type, tall, fair, blue-eyed, long-skulled, which is still common in Great Britain. The reader may smile at the word Nordic. But it was a genuine term of science before the Nazis made it a term of ballyhoo. It described a distinctive physical type which is not mythical. The myth lies in the assertion that the modern Germans belong to it. Most of them are round-skulled Alpines, and the long skull in Germany is not the national type.

Upon this mixed British population came the Roman Conquest. Julius Caesar made the reconnaissance in 55-54 B.C., and the Emperor Claudius began the fulfilment of the purpose some ninety years later. The total population of Britain (*i.e.* England and Wales) when

the Romans entered is computed to have been about one million, and it is not thought to have increased greatly during their stay. But here we are using a term that may mislead. The Roman Empire was the expansion of principles and practices rather than of a people, much as the Nazi empire promised to be in 1940 in its western conquests had things gone well with it and had its principles not been too foul for assimilation. Only a few officials in Britain came from Rome; the great majority were non-Romans and even non-Italians. The rank and file of the four legions and the auxiliary regiments employed in Britain represented the greatest immigration due to the conquest, perhaps, first and last, 100,000 new men who married in the country and settled in it on their discharge. But these soldiers were nearly all Celts and Teutons and therefore akin to the British stock, while the few of them who came from Spain had affinity with the Iberian strain in the British population. In sum, it may be said that the Roman Conquest added no new racial element. Its effects were cultural, economic and linguistic, and none of them were permanent in the eastern half of the island, although they left traces in the west.

After four centuries Britain ceased to belong to the Roman Empire. If it is misleading to say that the Romans came here, it is untrue to say that they departed. Some time before the final break most of the troops (by this time nearly all Britons) were withdrawn for service on the continent. The break itself was simply a cessation of intercourse, due mainly to the irruption of Teutonic armies into Gaul and Italy and the consequent severance of communications. This took place early in the fifth century after Christ.

Until nearly the end of the following century there is a gap in British history, during which there were revolutionary changes in the island, but little record has survived. Before the interruption Britain was a Roman province, with established towns in which the administration of districts was centred; with a vigorous villa life of large farms and country houses in which the prosperous lived on ~~estates~~ worked largely by slave labour; and a village life which comprised probably more than half the population, who lived in lowly huts and worked more or less communally in surrounding fields or adjacent mines. The prosperous and all the townsmen spoke Latin.

The villagers for the most part spoke the Celtic tongues of which Welsh is now the only survivor. Christianity existed as a strong minority religion among a large variety of Roman and Celtic cults. The province had long been pestered and torn by wild Celtic raiders (Picts from Scotland and Scots from Ireland) and by Teutonic pirates who sailed from the southern shores of the North Sea.

In 410 the link with Rome was cut, and the fog of war grew thick, scarcely lightened by any indisputable testimony to what was taking place. When it does lift, towards the end of the sixth century, we see a very different picture. The Roman province has gone. All over the eastern half of the country are Teutonic kingdoms inhabited mainly by people who describe themselves as Jutes, Angles and Saxons, recently arrived from Denmark and North Germany. The Picts and Scots have also gone, although the reason remains mysterious. The Celtic Britons are carrying on a losing fight in the western half of the country against continued Anglo-Saxon advance. These Britons have discarded town-life and the Latin language, but they have become totally Christian and regard themselves as the survivors of civilization. The Anglo-Saxons on their side are equally neither town-dwellers nor Latin-speakers; but neither are they Christians. They are pagans, not of the Roman-Celtic persuasions, but of warlike cults from the Baltic and the North.

The lost history of the change is of interest because on its recovery depends the answer to the question whether the modern English are mainly of Teutonic ancestry, mainly of Celtic, or of an equal mixture of the two. Nineteenth-century historians favoured the mainly Teutonic interpretation and pictured the conquest as involving the extermination or expulsion of most of the Celts of England. A less numerous school went to the other extreme and declared that the Saxon settlements were a mere coastal fringe, leaving the bulk of the population unaffected. Modern research has led to a compromise view involving substantial fusion of the racial elements. In the east the Saxons predominated, as is shown by the supremacy of their religions and language, laws and manner of life (and partly methods of agriculture). In the west the Saxons conquered to the borders of Cumberland, Wales and Cornwall, but they did so as a ruling race over a population which may have been by majority

Celtic. Inside the three regions named above they did not intrude at all. The Cumbrian mountains were invaded much later by a Teutonic element that came from the north; and South Wales later still by a colonization from mediaeval England. Taking the English population as a whole, it would seem that the Anglo-Saxon conquest left it as a Saxon-Celtic fusion, with the Celtic element small in the east and large in the west, and with Saxon culture predominant over the greater part of the country. Finally, it may be questioned whether these problems of ancestry are of great importance. Geographical environment—climate, food and occupation among its factors—is a more powerful moulding force than inherited characteristics. The modern English owe much to their forbears, but would believe in a lie if they set up some Celtic or Teutonic ancestor-worship to account for all that they are. The island itself has shaped the islanders.

The Saxon kingdoms expanded and consolidated. Three of them which had open frontiers to the west grew notably, namely, Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex. Mercia covered the midlands, and its growth prevented any further expansion of the more easterly kingdoms of East Anglia and Essex. These remained stationary until Mercian power reacted backwards and absorbed them. For like reasons the older southern kingdoms of Kent and Sussex found their development blocked by the powerful expanding state of Wessex, which occupied all the south-west, and they were in due course absorbed by it. Finally, the three successful states competed for supremacy and achieved it in turn, first Northumbria, then Mercia, then Wessex; and in the last stage of Saxon England the kings of Wessex were kings of all England.

Meanwhile the last great racial interfusion was taking place, that of the Northmen or Danes, as they are more commonly called in English history. These Scandinavians were active emigrants in the ninth and tenth centuries. Although mainly of the Nordic physical type, they were a mixed people before they moved, and included certain non-Nordic elements which had come out of the twilight of northern Asia. Those expanding from Sweden went south-eastwards into Russia and do not concern us here. Those from Norway sailed westwards to Shetland, the Faroes, Iceland, Greenland, and even North America. Part of the stream turned south and reached northern

Scotland, where the county name of Sutherland shows the direction from which its users approached. More Northmen came down the west Scottish coast, occupied its islands and peninsulas, and pressed south into the Irish Sea. There some of them turned to settle in the Cumbrian mountain-cluster, many more on the coasts of Ireland, and a few penetrated to Somerset and North Devon. The Northmen, known in Ireland as Ostmen or Eastmen, formed a considerable element in the Irish population and were the founders of the principal Irish seaports. In Scotland also they were important, but in England less so.

England was entered by the Danish section of the Scandinavian movement. The Danes coasted northern Europe to the English Channel, or sailed direct across the open North Sea. These courses brought them to southern and eastern England. In the south they ravaged and withdrew, and their Channel settlement was in northern France—Normandy. In eastern England they made a large settlement called the Danelaw comprising East Anglia, Yorkshire and half the midlands, or roughly everything east of a line drawn from London to Manchester. Only the military qualities of Alfred, the Wessex king, prevented them from getting much more. Danish chiefs ruled the Danelaw in the early decades of the tenth century, and then it was gradually won back by the descendants of Alfred. Later, in the early eleventh century, there were more Danish invasions and the collapse of Wessex kingship in the person of Ethelred the Redeless. For a little while Danish kings (Canute and his sons) ruled all England, until finally the Wessex line was restored. But these later Danish wars were due to the ambitions of kings and armies and not to the migrations of a people. The Danish national settlement in this country was the result of the earlier exodus and received little reinforcement from the victories of Canute.

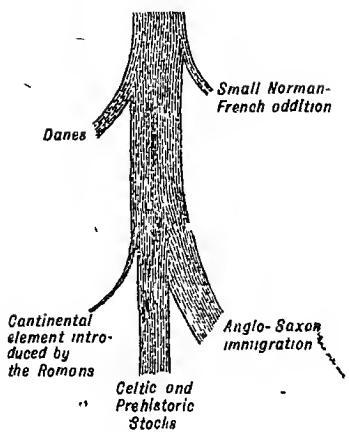
The Danish element in the Danelaw was considerable, but it seems undecided whether in places it amounted to the substitution of an entire new population for the old one, or whether it was nowhere more than the predominance of a ruling class. Probably there were some all-Danish settlements, but their total extent cannot be ascertained. The settlers certainly renamed many of the villages, and the Danelaw is rich in Scandinavian place-names to this day. Danish ways

of thought, as evidenced in counting by dozens rather than by scores, and in the use of distinctive weights and measures, took firm root. The proportion of the Teutonic to the Celtic in eastern England must have been increased. Altogether the Scandinavian settlement may with some probability be credited with an influence on the subsequent national development. In the Civil War of the seventeenth century it was roughly the Danelaw (with London) that was Puritan and fought for Parliament, while the rest of the country backed the King. That may suggest differing ancestral influences, but equally it may have been due to difference of geographical environment. About national characteristics one may argue much and prove little.

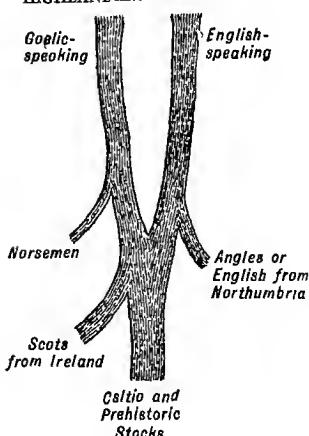
"Saxon and Norman and Dane are we" is an oft-quoted tag which is doubly incorrect, in omitting the Celts and including the Normans; for the Norman element in the English make-up was numerically so small as to be negligible. By 1066 the population may have amounted to two millions, while the strength of the invading army, with its attendant and consequent following of administrators, churchmen and traders, can be guessed at about twenty thousand. Even if this one per cent admixture be doubled or trebled, it still amounted to little as a contribution to the national stock. There were no Norman areas or villages, although there were a great number of estates peopled by Englishmen but belonging to individual Normans. The effects of the Norman Conquest were very important, but they were in the sphere of ideas and practices, and fall among the topics to be treated in the next chapter.

Since the eleventh century the infusions of new blood have not been great. Flemish weavers came to East Anglia in the fourteenth century; in the sixteenth London received Dutch refugees from Spanish tyranny, and in the seventeenth Huguenot refugees from that of Louis XIV. Cromwell allowed Jews to settle in England, but comparatively few did so until the past hundred years, when a considerable immigration set in from Germany and eastern Europe. This last is probably the most important additional element in the population since the Danelaw. More extensive have been the cross-currents of movement within the British Isles: English into Wales, and Welsh into England; English and Scots into Ireland, and Irishmen into England and Scotland; Scots into England, but noticeably

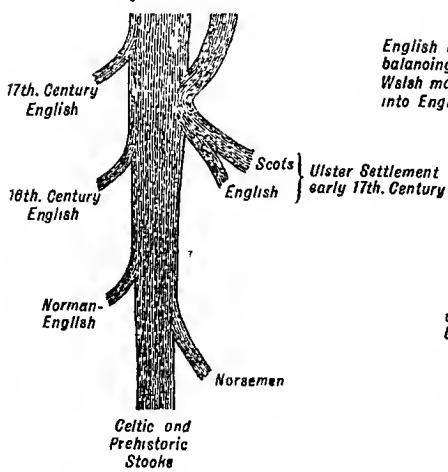
### THE ENGLISH



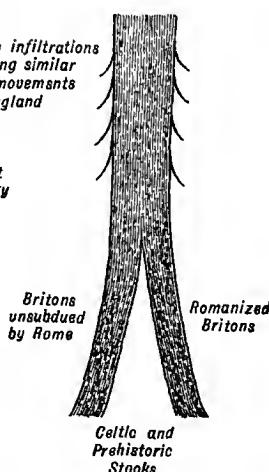
### THE SCOTS HIGHLANDERS      LOWLANDERS



### THE PEOPLES OF IRELAND IRISH MAJORITY      ULSTER



### THE WELSH



## THE BUILDING OF THE BRITISH PEOPLES

The proportions indicated are at best approximate and some are very disputable.

not English into Scotland. Such movements cause temporary tensions, but generally environment conquers. England has steadily turned her immigrants into Englishmen, and Ireland (except Ulster) into Irishmen; although it remains to be seen whether Scotland will survive unchanged the great Irish immigration of recent times.

## *2. The English Nation and its Political Instincts*

The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms established on the ruins of Roman Britain seem to have been governed as rough-and-ready autocracies, on the understanding that the king was obeyed as long as he was efficient, but that if he proved too soft or too hard his subjects would remove him. Respect for the hereditary principle was embodied in the rule that a vacancy on the throne should be filled from among the members of the royal house; but the leading men of the kingdom could choose any member who should seem fittest for the trust. An old idea had it that these leading men constituted a kind of democratic parliament, but it lacked foundation. There is no evidence that they were ever elected by the mass of the people. There were grades in early Saxon society, certain families being regarded as noble, and others merely as freemen. There were also slaves in every community, drawn from the criminals, debtors and prisoners of war.

These societies came into England as fighting colonists. After clearing an area of Britons, or subduing them to slavery, or concluding a peace of partition, the Saxons peopled it with their own settlements. A body of associated families staked their claim, and marked off the arable fields that were to produce their bread, the pasture-land for their animals, and the woodland or fen or other waste ground that yielded useful foodstuffs and materials. In the midst of the arable nucleus they built a compact village. Each free household had its individual shares in the cornland and its rights to make use of the other areas, although many of the farming operations were done by common effort. Free villages on this plan, with infinite variations of detail, spread over all the eastern half of England and throughout the midland plain. They were rare or absent in the hilly and mountainous west, where Celts were powerful, with different ideas of management. At the same time, it must be remembered, there was

another side of Saxon activities, that of war and defence. The king had to maintain a band, however small, of whole-time warriors, and they had somehow to be supported. It was done by the contributions of a different kind of village, not quite free, which the kings allotted to their military followings. Such a village might be peopled by conquered Celts, or by Saxons crowded out and obliged to settle on new land on the king's terms. But here was the germ of feudalism, the cultivators being obliged to support their warrior, and to that extent losing some of their freedom.

Before going on with that subject there is another to be mentioned, of even greater importance. The Saxons were heathen when they moved into England, and remained so for more than a century afterwards. It is one of the facts that indicate war to the death between them and the Britons as being more usual than compromise or fusion. The Christian Britons expressed extreme aversion for the pagan Saxons, and when, in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, the Saxons began to receive Christianity, they did so direct from Rome and not by persuasion of their British neighbours. There could hardly be a more eloquent testimony to a state of non-intercourse. However, converted the Saxons were, by a Roman mission that came over under Augustine in 597 and began work in Kent. Before a century had passed the whole country was Christian, and the Church was taking a large share in the development of its civilization.

In a land of subsistence farmers, with trade negligible and cash transactions not yet usual, feudalism was the only method by which government services could be carried on and the community strengthened. The military service was one, and when the Mercians and West Saxons made conquests from the Britons, there were new lands ready stocked with subject-inhabitants to support an expanding warrior class. In the same way the Northumbrians pressed northwards against the Picts and carried their kingdom up to the Forth. They carried also their English tongue, which from this vantage-point spread ultimately over all Celtic Scotland below the Highland Line. The Church speedily made itself into another state service. Missionaries developed into bishops, dioceses and parishes were founded, abbeys were built to house pious men, and it had all to be

paid for. The method was the same as with the warriors who were destined to develop into mediaeval knights and barons. The king had always a right to demand dues and services from the people to maintain his estate. He now commanded certain of his people to yield these things to bishop or abbot or parish priest instead; and in course of time the lands occupied by such people became the lands of the Church. In an age of expansion, when there were still conquests to be made from the Celts, these things involved as yet no great inroads on the position of most of the free population, but the tendency was established. Feudalism should not be regarded as evil. It was a necessary institution incidental to a particular state of society. If freedom is to be preserved, there must be defence and it must be paid for, and the payment involves a partial sacrifice of freedom. The ecclesiastical service similarly defrayed was desired by the mediaeval community, much as medical and educational services are desired by its descendants.

With the Danish invasions creating an age of misfortune, feudalism took a different turn. Before the first incursions were defeated by Alfred and fixed in the Danelaw, the ravaging was country-wide. Saxon government collapsed, and many a free village was reduced to desperate straits. Strong fighting leaders took command of local defence, and their price was feudal submission. The fighting man built a stronghold and organized a force, and those could have his protection who paid for it. Once done, it was not easily undone. The wars continued for over a century after Alfred. First his successors reconquered the Danelaw after long fluctuating campaigns. Then the later Danish invasions tortured the whole country, and ended by setting a Danish king on the throne. By that time multitudes of free village settlements had become manors under feudal owners, who were called *thegns* in Anglo-Saxon, but afterwards knights. The manor-house, often fortified, dominated the houses of the villagers. Some of the land was reserved for the lord of the manor, and cultivated for him by the village. He collected dues and ~~pesquisites~~ of many kinds, did justice among his vassals, and prevented any outsider from doing them injustice. Great lords had also arisen, superior to the lords of manors. The Saxons called them *ealdormen*, and the Danes *jarls* or earls. They commanded the *thegns*

royal justice and law-abiding habits. The *Domesday* survey, only twenty years after the conquest, proves that there must have been a class of trained officials or civil servants. We know little about them, but no others could have made that astonishing economic report. On the legal side the principle was enforced that every man took some part, however humble, in the administration of justice, and that it was compulsory that he should do so. The great barons or tentants-in-chief had to attend the king's court, where laws were made and the highest justice done. The knights and other free men of the second rank had to attend the shire court, which not only tried criminals and decided disputes, but assessed each man's share of the taxation demanded from the shire. The serfs and villeins had to attend the manor court, where their petty crimes were judged. The lord or his deputy presided, but in theory the judgement was given by the voices of all present. Nearly all penalties short of death were fines, in money or goods, and the fines went into the pocket of him who held the court. Justice, being profitable, was saved from neglect. The reforming kings were not content to leave so much to local courts. They increased and extended the powers of their own courts at Westminster, which were developed and specialized out of the general king's court; and they sent travelling judges on circuit round the shires to keep an eye on taxation and take the more important cases out of the shire court. The travelling judges, being strangers to the locality, needed information on disputes about land and property, and so they took to summoning before them sworn men or jurors to tell the impartial truth. The jurors were at first witnesses, but later became the jury we know.

William the Conqueror loved law and order. William Rufus would at least permit no disorder. Henry I was called by his admiring subjects the Lion of Justice. Stephen we have mentioned. Henry II was a passionate man, but his passions included one for equal justice and sound administration. Those kings cover the period from 1066 to 1189. There followed three successive bad or useless kings: Richard I, who neglected his duty and spent most of his time adventuring in remote countries; John, who was actively malevolent, on terms of hatred with all his subjects; and Henry III, who was pious, weak, extravagant and long-lived. Between them these three run from

1189 to 1272. Their period demonstrated that a strange thing had happened.

The strong kings had made law and enforced it on unruly barons. The bad kings now neglected the law or tried to break it, and the barons came out on the law's side and enforced respect for it. A constitutional sense had been formed among people capable of thought. Every act of arbitrary power had been provided against by some law or charter or practice of the past. Precedents could be quoted. The constitution was known and was worth fighting for. For ten years, under Richard I, the constitution worked with an absentee king. The barons supported the crown's officials, and justice continued to be done. John was different, an intelligent, capable man, filled with spite and evil humours. He broke laws right and left for the pleasure of law-breaking. The result was Magna Carta, the culminating event of this curious period, which may be called that of the good barons. Magna Carta contained little that was new, but it did decisively re-state what was old and in peril of overthrow. The barons forced it on John, ruled by its principles while his young son Henry III was a minor, and enforced it on Henry when he grew up to rule for himself. Henry III was not malevolent, but he was so weakly generous that he could be got at by all sorts of unworthy people, to whom he gave his subjects' substance with both hands. Foreign adventurers wanting money for projects, his wife's foreign friends and relations desiring landed estates, papal agents in search of financial contributions, foreign churchmen looking for jobs, all were accommodated by this royal giver until Englishmen grew sick of it. The Barons' War resulted, a patriotic revolt in the name of "England for the English", headed by barons all of whom were of Norman or French ancestry. England had indeed absorbed her conquerors.

After the Barons' War the feeble old king's son took charge and in 1272 became king as Edward I. He was a strong, hot-tempered man, and a great stickler for the law as he could read it. For his people at large the reign of law was strengthened, but he had some hostile passages with his barons. They thought his demands excessive, especially in the matter of military service. In the resulting row they carried their point, and the "Confirmation of the Charters"

ensued. Once again it was in form an appeal to the established, not an innovation; and henceforward for centuries the champions of liberty talked always of preserving ancient liberties even when they were in fact demanding new ones. It was a valuable mental habit leading to the grafting of new upon old and to a distaste for revolutionary methods.

The population, as we have seen, had doubled itself during the Saxon centuries, and it had now doubled again in the much shorter time since the Norman Conquest. In the forty years after Edward's time it may have reached four and a half millions. By drainage and clearance, soil improvement and general security, the land had grown more productive and could support more people in greater comfort. Trade also had grown important, first in the sale of raw materials like wool, hides, tin and lead, then in the export of English-made unfinished cloth. Against these came in more comforts and luxuries such as wines and fruits and linens and fine dyed cloths. The thirteenth century had been an age of growing wealth, and the early fourteenth gave the like promise. The feudal state was at its best.

War and pestilence brought a check and a breakdown. Edward I had waged his wars and had been obliged to confirm his barons' charters in consequence. He had completed the conquest of Wales. He had failed after a promising beginning to conquer Scotland, and Bannockburn flattened his son's half-hearted renewal of the project. Edward I had carried on an indecisive war over the provinces still held by the English kings in France. Edward II's wars, Bannockburn excepted, were at home. His barons hated him for personal reasons and ultimately murdered him, but these scuffles were on a small scale and produced no constitutional results. Edward III made a novel bid for empire and glory. He trumped up a claim to the throne of France, and so initiated a long series of campaigns called collectively the Hundred Years War. The opening stages were successful. A sea fight at Sluys, a land fight at Crécy, and the capture of Calais by siege made the king popular but at the same time weaker, for he was short of money.

Then came the Black Death, the pestilence that broke the fair prospects of mediaeval society. It swept over the known world from China to Portugal. In England it killed a third of the population, and

its recrudescences, coupled with the economic results, are reckoned to have reduced the population still further in the next twenty years. The figure became something like two and a half millions, or little more than half what it had been at the opening of the fourteenth century.

This was the beginning of the mediaeval breakdown, for shortage of labour upset the feudal economy. Already a good many villeins and serfs had secured emancipation from their compulsory labour services, and had become rent-paying tenants or wage-earning labourers. With the growth of trade came a rise in the price of wool, and lords of manors, short of labour, were encouraged to change arable land into sheep pasture. The wool business, from the sheep's back to the tailor's shop, was a solvent of feudalism, for none of its stages fitted into the traditional labour services: all fell naturally into the scheme of wage payments and money profits. These factors caused the serfs and villeins to claim their liberty. In the late fourteenth century there was something comparable to a modern labour movement, with resentment at class distinctions, and combinations for redress. It culminated in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, which rocked and loosened the fabric of the state as an earthquake shakes a building. Thenceforward for a generation the emancipation of the serfs went on rapidly. By the mid-fifteenth century there were hardly any left. The status of the English inhabitant of a manor was either that of a copyholder who held permanent right to a strip of land for a fixed rent or of a labourer at daily wages. Both were free. The copyholder could sell his land rights, and the labourer could leave the manor for other employment.

Meanwhile the long French war went on, not with its early success, and this and the economic stresses contributed greatly to the development of Parliament. Parliament was a word and a thing originated in the thirteenth century. The barons who revolted against Henry III themselves constituted the King's court or council and they made the innovation of inviting members of other classes of society to meet them and hear what was going on. Edward I was attracted by the idea. He had no conception of political rights or representative government. He was a sovereign appointed to rule a people. How could he do it most efficiently? The chief difficulty was that of com-

munication, of getting his aims and his orders over to his subjects. The obligation to attend court brought the barons into contact with him, but it was physically impossible to bring everybody else up to Court. But why not order everybody else to send select representatives, to hear the King's new laws and explain them afterwards to the constituent public? After various experiments Edward adopted the solution embodied in the Model Parliament of 1295. Each shire or county was required to send two landowners from its shire court; and they were known as knighlts of the shire. Each town or city was required to send two burgesses or citizens. So was Parliament founded.

All these elected members were summoned to hear and obey, not to argue. But that they speedily began to do. Legislation for redress of abuses began in the form of petitions by the Commons, elected as above, the Lords being those tenants-in-chief (holding direct from the king) who had always composed his court. The Commons petitioned, the king assented, and a law was afterwards drawn up by the royal officers and put into effect. Sometimes it was not quite what the Commons had asked for. Legislation by petition therefore gave way to legislation by bill, the bill being the exact words of the law desired. When passed by Commons and Lords it was presented to the king and confirmed or rejected exactly as it stood.

The royal revenue consisted of income from the crown lands, various dues and levies on other lands, and certain fixed and ancient tolls on trade, known as customs. The long war caused Edward III to seek additional revenue. Most of it was obtained by putting very heavy export duties on English wool, which foreign manufacturers were finding indispensable. The Commons early claimed control of this additional taxation on the ground that all the processes of the wool trade were the affair of their constituents. The sole right of the Commons to vote taxes to the crown was a fairly speedy development. By the end of the fourteenth century the Commons were a power in the government, imposing or removing taxes, passing laws on various matters, and often confirming or objecting to the king's choice of ministers. If they thought that a minister was doing vital harm to the country, they would impeach him, that is, lay the charges and the evidence before the Lords who, in their ancient function of a court of justice, would decide the case and enforce penalties. All

this was not bad progress for a hundred years of Parliament. Its rapidity was due to the Black Death and the French war.

When Parliament was founded in the thirteenth century, the townsmen and the smaller landowners of the shires were the only free men besides the great barons, and the Commons therefore represented all the free men. When, later on, the villeins and serfs became free men, the same principle was not observed. The shire court was not thrown open to them as voters for the knights of the shire. On the contrary, the right of voting was limited by a special Act of Parliament to freeholders worth not less than forty shillings a year, then a considerable sum. Thus was opened the rift between the enfranchised and the unenfranchised subjects of the king, which led in later days to impassioned struggles for the reform of Parliament.

Disorderly freedom was the state of the new English society that developed after the fat days of feudalism had been ended by the Black Death. It affected all classes. The peasants struck with murderous accompaniments for lower rents and higher wages. The Londoners sympathized with the rebels of 1381 and let them into the city. The combined mob burnt John of Gaunt's Strand mansion because he was disliked, and would have burnt him too if he had been inside. John Wyclif challenged authority in the Church, and defied the Pope and the bishops. Lesser priests such as John Ball egged on the peasant rioters. Soldiers from France added to the turmoil, and their noble leaders formed them into private armies dangerous to the state. Plots and revolts and political murders culminated in the deposition and death of Richard II in 1399. The ensuing fifteenth century was one long catalogue of similar events. The French war, revived victoriously by Henry V, ended in shame under Henry VI. The nobles took up arms in earnest and exterminated one another in the Wars of the Roses (from 1455). For thirty years, on and off, the struggles continued, a sordid faction-fight in which all semblance of principles at stake was quickly lost. The people at large, landowners, merchants, peasants, prayed only for the end of it and for some strong man to take control. England had had enough of disorderly freedom, and was ready to try the other sort, with the emphasis on order. Such was the position by 1485.

### 3. *England under Tudor Leadership*

Great men like Alfred and William the Norman and Edward I had shaped the destiny of England in times past. With the Tudor period we are conscious of entering an age of great leadership, in which the national problems were solved by bold judgement and the national qualities clarified and intensified by successful facing of risks. The Tudor despotism, so-called, was no such thing. The Tudor sovereigns relied on the approval and support of the people and could not have acted without it. It is true that they often acted with a high hand, and made dissentients and minorities pay harshly for not being in tune with the national feeling. But so the nation wished it to be. The sixteenth century was a dangerous age, in which minorities could create civil war and dissentients were often traitors. The English were becoming self-conscious and proud as never before, and Tudor kingship interpreted the mood. It worked also for material success, and the country began once again to grow, not without some checks and distresses, in wealth and estimation in the world. To this day Tudor history makes happy reading.]

Henry VII was the first and in many ways the best of the Tudors. The later phases of the fifteenth-century civil wars had left Richard III, son of one of the baronial faction leaders, on the throne. Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, belonging to the defeated faction, was an exile in France. Richard proceeded to make himself impossible by carrying the usual course of arbitrary confiscations and executions to such a pitch that his own followers felt unsafe. Henry watched his opportunity and invaded with a small force in 1485. At Bosworth he fell upon Richard III and slew him and his leading accomplices, having won over the others before the battle.

This kind of thing, an invasion led by an exile working with internal treachery to a change of sovereign, had happened time and again in the previous century, and Englishmen must have grown cynical about the result. On the face of it the Bosworth affair and the elevation of Henry VII were quite in the established tradition, and might be expected to yield neither permanent success to the victors nor any benefit whatsoever to a civil-war-weary England. No one realized that Bosworth was the end of a chapter. Yet so it was.

During the previous period no man's house, family or living had been safe. Self-appointed local dictators had usurped authority. Their men entered homes and billeted themselves on the occupants, seized land and requisitioned goods, and used all manner of violence to achieve these ends. The peaceful, law-abiding man was at a discount. Not even the law could aid him, for the courts were at the mercy of power, and no decisions availed against it. Henry VII (founder of despotism!) restored the ordinary man's liberty. He forbade the faction-leaders to keep private troops or to interfere in any way with justice and legitimate administration. He meant what he said, and clipped the power of anarchy not so much by bloody execution—which was rare—as by swingeing fines which left the culprits alive and humiliated. The old disorder revolted more than once, but Henry was a soldier at need, although he did not love war. He defended his throne in battle and pursued his exiled opponents by diplomacy, so that not even in Germany could a traitor feel safe.

The interests of the ordinary man were the care of Henry VII. The ordinary free man now meant all the people, for there were no longer any serfs of sub-human status. The countrymen, gentle and simple alike, were served by the enforcement of law and social order. The townsmen's interests thrrove on the king's handling of trade. He increased English shipping by a Navigation Act reserving to it certain trades. He gave bounties to encourage the building of large ships. The Hanseatic League of German cities was the greatest obstacle to English commerce with northern Europe, for it had its depots everywhere, amassed privileges in foreign ports and gave none in its own, and in particular had obtained excessive facilities from the weak English governments of the preceding period. Henry carried on an economic war of attrition against the League, and increased the sales of English cloth to the Netherlands and Germany. With the Netherlands and with Spain he made treaties of mutual abolition of dues and restrictions on trade. He cleared up a forty years' quarrel with Denmark, and so legalized the visits of English ships to the Iceland fishery. After a diplomatic contest with Venice he opened the way for a new long-distance trade with Italy and the Levant. All this represented the first consistent application of the

mercantile policy, of which we shall have more to say in later chapters. It meant the conscious fostering of private trade and industry by state action.

With Henry VIII came the Reformation, the separation of England from the much more than religious jurisdiction of the Pope. It was the greatest of all the steps towards the attainment of a place among the world's great peoples; for it carried with it a freedom of mind and spirit which transcended the political and economic freedoms already achieved. Through the later mediaeval period there had been a strong anti-clerical feeling, common to all classes, due to a belief that the clergy were over-endowed and neglectful of their work. Coupled with this there had been an unquestioning belief in the doctrines of the Church and no general disposition to accept the views of the early Protestant sect of Lollards founded by John Wyclif. In the fifteenth century the Lollards were harshly persecuted with general approval. These twin attitudes of dislike of the clergy and acceptance of their teaching have been by no means unusual in the history of European peoples. Henry VIII appealed to the first whilst not tampering with the second. He made few changes in ritual and doctrine, but he did abolish every item of the Pope's authority in England, and he confiscated to the national use a large part of the accumulated wealth of the Church. The rebuilding of the Royal Navy in 1536-43 and the fortification of every invasion-point on the coastline are seldom connected with the Reformation, but they were in fact financed by it.

Church affairs make for bad history, for they excite personal feeling in most people who write of them, and the *fraus pia* or cooking of the story is a not infrequent outcome. Henry VIII has thus been vilified and blackened to a greater extent than his undoubted faults deserve. He was sometimes vindictive, sometimes unjust, sometimes unfaithful, and he shed more blood than his wiser father would have done. But he achieved the task which the nation's interest and the nation's will demanded. And he did it without a civil war; uniquely, because in all other countries the Reformation demanded mass bloodshed instead of individual executions. If there was a Tudor despotism, this stout, passionate man was its worst despot. Yet he carried every stage of the Reformation by due process of law, enacted in a properly

elected Parliament by Commons, Lords and King. He was no enemy of the public will. He was its interpreter. He said himself that he never felt his position stronger than when Parliament was sitting, and his actions show that he meant it. The people liked him and trusted him. If he was a tyrant to some, the public must share the blame. When a French invasion threatened in 1545, the free bowmen and billmen of England, 120,000 out of a population of three millions, stood ready to march to the coast when the beacon fires should bring the signal. The Navy averted that menace, and only a few counties had actually to muster. But with all it was "God save King Harry!"—"God bless Your Grace!"

When he died in 1547 there followed an interval of eleven years which showed what he had been worth. His only son, Edward VI, became king at the age of nine and died at sixteen. Edward cannot be blamed for the misgovernment of his reign. It was due to a faction of unprincipled nobles headed first by the Duke of Somerset and then by the Duke of Northumberland. These men organized corruption and scrambled for loot, prostituted administration into a trade in jobs, neglected the Navy and mishandled foreign policy. The two leaders, however, showed considerable religious sincerity in going out of their way to be unpopular by abetting the new Protestant movement that had not made much headway in Henry's time. They countenanced the doctrinal Reformation as distinguished from Henry's political Reformation. Its chief agent was Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was substantially the author of the prayer-book used in the Church of England. As the best work in its kind of literature ever produced in this country, it wound its way into the hearts and minds of many generations of Englishmen. But the Protestants in Edward's reign were a minority. Most men preferred the old Catholic services. The Protestants also raised enmity by their overbearing conduct, and incurred part of the general loathing felt for the government that patronized them. It was not long before misfortune overtook them.

When Edward VI died, his elder sister, Mary Tudor, was the rightful successor. Northumberland attempted to exclude her from the throne in favour of the Lady Jane Grey, his daughter-in-law. But Northumberland was already hated, and Mary beloved as the child

## THE FORMATIVE CENTURIES

the "New Found Land" a barrier in the path. Sebastian Cabot sailed in 1509 to seek a way round the barrier, and claimed to have found it; but the ice had turned him back. He had probably been through Hudson Strait. Henry VIII's reign saw projects and voyages to discover the same North West Passage. Under Elizabeth there were two notable explorers to this end: Sir Martin Frobisher, who made three voyages in 1576-8 for a London combination called the Company of Cathay; and John Davis, who made three more in 1585-7, and reached latitude  $73^{\circ}$  N., the highest limit of the century. Both of them claimed that the Passage existed and that they had been on the brink of sailing through. Neither realized the vast extent of close-packed islands and ice-blocked channels between the Atlantic and Asiatic waters. The men who accomplished such voyages with very poor equipment were consummate seamen. The voyages helped to make them navigators also and geographers, and gave them a knowledge of the physical world essential to founders of an oceanic empire.

Some believed that a passage round Asia by the North East would yield the best way to the tropical coasts where the spices grew. A company organized by the Duke of Northumberland in 1553 sent out Sir Hugh Willoughby and Richard Chancellor to make this discovery. Willoughby was frozen to death on the Murman coast. Chancellor found the White Sea and made his way overland to Moscow. It was all unknown country to Englishmen. They obtained trading privileges from the Czar, and their company became the Muscovy or Russia Company. The North East Passage remained undiscovered.

The tropical zone of the Atlantic offered great attractions. The Portuguese claimed the monopoly of the West African coast, but had not occupied it in sufficient force to repel intruders. From the reign of Edward VI English intruders were busy, trading with the independent negro tribes, collecting gold, ivory and Guinea pepper. It was a lucrative and deadly trade. Fever killed most of the sailors, and the merchant-investors grew rich. The Portuguese were indignant and sent out armed squadrons which added to the risks.

Sir John Hawkins, a man of wide vision, drew both sides of the Atlantic into a great mercantile-political scheme. To the west were

the great colonies of the Spanish Empire, the countries that, with Brazil, are now Latin America. Spain regulated very strictly the trade with these colonies, and particularly the slave trade which supplied negro labour for the plantations. Licensees were issued to merchant groups to supply so many negroes in a given time at a fixed price, and no trading was allowed but by the licensees. So far no Englishman had ever had a slaving licence or had thought of asking for one. Hawkins conceived that he had something to offer, his service with armed ships to police the Caribbean and keep down the swarm of corsairs and pirates (mostly French) who were already harrying Spanish wealth. The scheme began well but went astray. Hawkins made two successful voyages with African slaves and English manufactures, but never obtained his licence. On the third voyage the Viceroy of Mexico fell upon him and destroyed his squadron after pledging abstention from hostilities. Hawkins escaped, and with him Francis Drake. English seamen never forgave or forgot this affair, which did more than anything else to end the ancient Anglo-Spanish alliance. It happened in 1568.

At the same time the revolt of the Netherlands against Spanish rule and the religious wars in France showed Europe to be divided into Protestant and Catholic camps. England took her stand with the Protestants and became their leader and refuge. Victorious enemies might overrun them on the continent, but could never overcome the core of the resistance so long as the island stood behind its naval shield. The English Navy was the crucial factor in the historical decisions of the age. Elizabeth and Burghley had stopped its decline. In the 'seventies they commissioned Hawkins to strengthen it. By ten years' hard work he achieved a great naval reform in time to fight the Spanish Armada in 1588.

While Hawkins was planning and building in the dockyards, Drake, a younger man, was fighting overseas. He turned first to the Caribbean to avenge the overthrow which he and Hawkins had suffered together. In 1572-3 he raided the Isthmus of Panama and captured a mule-train or convoy bearing treasure that had come up the Pacific coast from Peru. Several other captains were in the same area with varying success. Some came home rich and some were hanged when the Spaniards caught them. It was now very clearly

war in the tropics, although war was not formally declared in Europe.

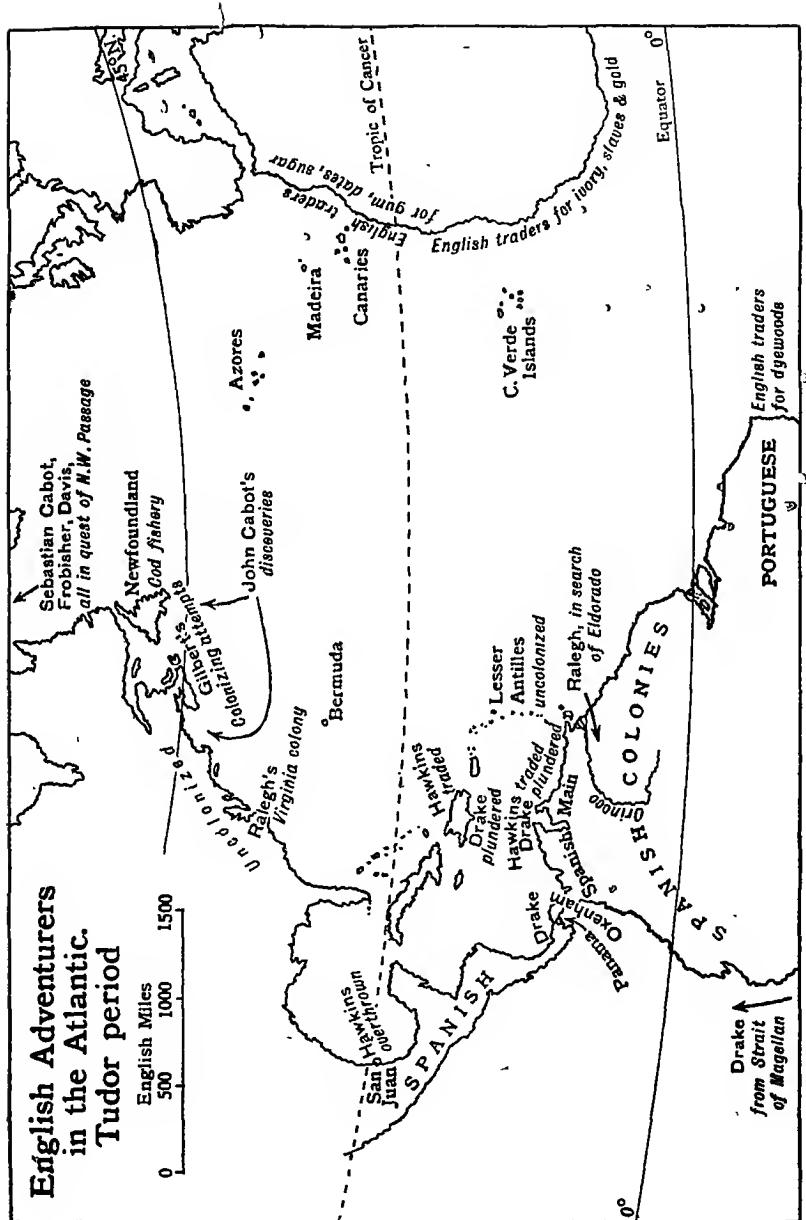
Vast empire-building schemes were evolved by these daring Elizabethans. In the 1570's Sir Richard Grenville and a Devon combination urged the discovery and colonization of *Terra Australis Incognita*, the unknown southern continent that was supposed to fringe the South Pacific from the Straits of Magellan to New Guinea. Drake was put in charge of the project and sailed for *Terra Australis* in 1577. But Drake much preferred attacking Spaniards to searching for unknown continents. With the Queen's connivance he converted the expedition into a treasure-raid on the west coast of South America. He succeeded beyond expectation and ballasted his ship with silver. Then he sailed home by California, the North Pacific, the Spice Islands, the Indian Ocean and the Cape of Good Hope, having circumnavigated the globe. No colonies came out of Drake's proceedings, but he did lay a foundation-stone of eastern empire by his treaty of trade with the Sultan of Ternate in the spice-bearing Moluccas. For true colonial effort we have to look to the Atlantic, where Sir Walter Ralegh sent two expeditions to colonize Virginia. Both failed, while Sir Humphrey Gilbert lost his life in trying to exploit Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. These first steps were inevitably faulty, and much experience had yet to be gained.

The adventurous, versatile Elizabethan age ended in the long war with Spain that began in 1585. Its pattern resembled that of later wars: invasion of the island planned by the superior military power, invasion foiled by the island's sea power, the island a citadel of freedom keeping alive the resistance of the continent to a despot, the islanders maintaining their confidence by continental jabs and oceanic punches. Staying-power, as always, was with those who drew their nourishment from the sea. They finished fresh and could have gone on indefinitely. But the military giant had had enough. He was not on this occasion down and out; but he had had enough. Warfare was civilized, not total, in those times, and a peace of mutual respect could be concluded, as now it cannot be.

The Tudors ended with the mateless queen in 1603. How far they had led England from the squalid anarchy of the fifteenth century! In personal freedom, in literature and music, in government and the

## English Adventurers in the Atlantic. Tudor period

English Miles  
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art of tolerant living, in trade and exploration and war, she stood pre-eminent and envied. In numbers she was still a little nation, not much more than four millions strong.

#### *4. The Constitution and the Old Colonial Empire*

Governments, however good, are apt to get out of touch with public opinion, and so become less good. The chief aim of the modern British constitution is to preserve liberty by making and keeping the executive the expression of the public will. It has not been easy to devise the means. They have resulted from much trial and error. A great deal of this work was achieved in the Stuart century, which began when James VI of Scotland became James I of England in succession to his cousin Elizabeth.

In the later Middle Ages rebellion was endemic in England. It may be noted that the period of popular risings began with the decay of feudalism and the rise of a free common folk. The risings were no evidence of any special English sinfulness, but rather a clumsy means of expressing to the government an opinion that it was not doing well. Their modern parliamentary equivalent is a vote of censure. When government is really strong and broad-based, rebellions and votes of censure meet a like fate. A typical vote-of-censure rebellion was that of 1497, when the men of Cornwall thought themselves overtaxed and marched up to London and fought the king at Black-heath. The age of these popular rebellions stretched roughly from the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 to the Rising of the North in 1569. Thenceforward for the last thirty-five years of Elizabeth's reign no such movements took place. But, coincidentally, Parliament was becoming a more efficient debating assembly, and something like a parliamentary opposition was taking shape. The rebellions had been a measure of the inability of the more rudimentary Parliament to act as a safety-valve for discontent.

The above considerations may form some clue to the evaluation of Stuart transactions. The Stuart period consisted of two reigns (James I and Charles I) in which the old monarchy was growing more and more out of touch with the people, and Parliament was growing more and more effective as an engine of criticism; then of

an interval of civil war and dictatorship; and finally of two reigns (Charles II and James II) of a restored and limited monarchy which sought to evade its obligation to accept Parliament as an equal partner. The end of it all was the brief and bloodless revolution of 1688-9, after which the constitution was a settled question.

The Tudors had brought the old English monarchy to a high condition, with a hard-working sovereign, a privy council of working ministers picked by him, and occasional meetings of Parliament to give public consent to new laws and the collection of taxes. It was not expected that Parliament should criticize the royal government, and Elizabeth showed considerable displeasure when her later Parliaments took to doing so. But no passing storms could shake the bond of affection between her and her people. With James I it was different. He had no conception of the position already attained by Parliament, and still less of that which its members were now aspiring to achieve. He thought of himself as a king of a century before. English political leaders, who had waited for their reforms out of respect for Elizabeth, now conceived that there was lost time to be made up. The clash was inevitable. James asserted that a king was selected for his office by the divine will, and therefore accountable to God alone; and that for his subjects to resist or dispute with him was impious. The members of Parliament re-defined their ancient privileges of free speech and control of finance. They resisted arbitrary taxes and royal interference with trade, and even criticized the foreign policy of which James considered himself a master. But these were surface irritations covering a deeper disease. The English squires and merchants were men of Puritan outlook, desiring to make the English church a plain Protestant affair with the emphasis on godly preaching and teaching, and with priestly ritual subdued. James and his son Charles would have none of it. Their bishops exalted ritual and the priestly office, claimed to override the wishes of the congregations, and revived a moral and religious censorship over men's lives such as had not been seen since the Middle Ages.

The struggle continued through both reigns, growing more exasperated after Charles I became king in 1625. Charles quarrelled violently with his Parliament in 1629 and determined to call Parlia-

ments no more. For eleven years he ruled as a despot, in defiance of the established constitution, raising money not by the grant of his subjects but by the wit of his lawyers, punishing critics by means unknown to the English common law, exalting Archbishop Laud and the anti-Puritan priesthood. Then he allowed Laud to make a similar move in Presbyterian Scotland. The Scots flared up in a religious fury, swore to a national Covenant, and sent an army to the Tweed. Charles could do nothing. England had not yet fought against him, but she would not fight for him. On all hands men pressed him to call a Parliament. In 1640 he called the Short Parliament, but would not yield to its demands. He dismissed it, while the Scots moved south. He had again to call a Parliament; and this was the Long Parliament which was to do strange things.

During these discontents England was growing richer, better educated, more populous. The seventeenth century was one of solid advance in the arts of life. The impatience with a form of government that had outlived its usefulness was stimulated by the sense of growing power in the nation.

In the first forty years of the Stuart century England fulfilled the Elizabethan promises and founded an empire across the oceans. Waiting no longer for the North West Passage to show a shorter way, the East India Company, chartered by the old queen in 1600, sent out its ships round the Cape of Good Hope. They fought the Dutch in the Spice Islands, had the worst of it, and then turned to continental India. The trading factories of Surat and Madras marked the beginning of a long history of commerce and the immense results that were to spring from it. Other companies worked the African coast and still sought the North West Passage, sold English goods in Russia, and made profit in the Levant.

Across the Atlantic the Virginia scheme dropped by Raleigh was resumed and made a fact. Virginia was a training-ground in colonization, and its terrible early sufferings were a warning to later protectors. It found salvation at length in tobacco and became the first of "the plantations", which for the next two centuries were to form a backcloth to the metropolitan stage of English life. Other plantations quickly followed, Bermuda by itself in the ocean, Maryland to the north of Virginia, the West Indian islands of Barbados and the

Leeward group, half a dozen river settlements in Guiana which failed to take root. All the early plantations grew tobacco, a culture easy to learn and needing little capital, very suitable for pioneer colonists on new soil. They grew it so successfully that they glutted the market and prices fell. It was then found that Virginia and Maryland could alone stay in the business, while the Caribbean colonies had to turn to something else. They turned to sugar, and with it they opened a period of brilliant success.

The greatest foundation of the Old Colonial Empire was the group of New England colonies, not because of their economic value to the mother country—they had none—but because of their influence on the subsequent shaping of the United States and the modern world. From 1620 to 1640 the extreme Puritan leaders, who would not live in an England harbouring bishops and prayer-books, led their people in thousands across the Atlantic and there constructed states that were virtually republics yielding only nominal allegiance to the English crown. Although republican, the early New England colonies were not democratic. Only a minority had political rights—the so-called church members (really the governing committees of the churches) whose religious views satisfied the strictest scrutiny. The mass of the population had no votes, and obeyed the few under pain of expulsion. Why did they go there? Because, on the material side, New England offered success to any man who would work. The peasant who could be only a wage-labourer in Old England might become a prosperous freehold farmer in New, and there were great possibilities for the man whose talents drew him to trade.

The reign of Charles I witnessed what has been called the great exodus. The numbers who went to the plantations equalled or exceeded those who went to New England, and in that one generation the colonial empire was firmly founded. Nothing like this emigration occurred again for two hundred years, until, in the first half of the nineteenth century, a similar outflow founded the dominions of the British Commonwealth.

The Puritan emigration ceased when the Long Parliament met in 1640, for the event offered new hope at home. For the first year the Parliament was unanimous against the King. It removed his ministers, abolished his Star Chamber, made his royal taxation illegal, and

asserted the right of Parliament to a share in the activities of government. Then came a rift over religion. The Puritans demanded the abolition of bishops and prayer-book, "root and branch", while the churchmen were ready to fight for their preservation. Thus the King got a party after all, and the Civil War began in 1642 with religion, now linked with the throne, as the touchstone.

Ostensibly the Civil War was decided by the sword of Oliver Cromwell, who struck down the royal forces on the fields of Marston Moor and Naseby. But a previous decision had alone made Cromwell's army a possibility, and indeed revolt against the King possible at all; for at the outset the Navy had sided with the Parliament against the Royalists. Some of the seamen were Puritans, but perhaps that was not the deciding factor. It was rather that the Stuart kings had let down the Navy from its high Elizabethan level, and had humbled it by their incompetence in recent actions with both French and Spaniards. The Navy's choice was decisive in this sense, that if it had backed the King he would have won the war at the outset. For London was the treasury and arsenal of the Parliamentary cause and also one of its major recruiting grounds. London lived by carrying on three-quarters of the country's foreign trade, and London blockaded would have been bankrupt and starving in three months. The Navy saved English liberty from Charles I no less than from the foreign aggressors who came after him. It kept open the sea routes into the Thames and, as so often in our history, the side which wielded sea power won.

The Parliament and Cromwell's army won, executed the King, and set up a republic or Commonwealth. Army and politicians then quarrelled, and Cromwell took dictatorial control as Lord Protector. He would have become king, but that republican feeling in the army disapproved. Cromwell's desire was to settle in permanent fashion the country's affairs, but it could not be done by any expedient short of restoring the monarchy balanced by Parliament, as enacted in the Long Parliament's reforms of 1641. England, as ever, was at heart conservative, and the country wanted a king. There was no possible king but Charles II, son of the victim of 1649. At length, after Cromwell's death, the leading men combined to call Charles to the throne amid the nation's plaudits, in the pious hope that he

would play the game. The Restoration of 1660 opened a new chapter. It was not the restoration of the old monarchy as exemplified by the Tudors, but of the limited monarchy established by general consent when the Long Parliament met. The king was to hold the executive authority, but Parliament to control taxation, while the courts were to apply the ancient English law against government and subject impartially. Such a balance depended on the loyalty and moderation of the agreeing parties. Without good faith and without good sense it would founder.

✓ In colonial and maritime affairs the Commonwealth and the Restoration form one story of steady achievement and success. During the civil war the East India Company fell on bad times, for a swarm of interlopers infringed its monopoly and reduced it to inactivity. Cromwell refounded it, and Charles II confirmed its new constitution. Under the Restoration the Company enjoyed splendid prosperity. Trade expanded and profits rose and the royal favour shone warm and bright. There were mutterings of jealousy from the unprivileged (for none but the Company might send ships to the East), but their moment had yet to come. Other oceanic companies prospered: the Royal African Company, chiefly engaged in shipping slaves to the plantations; and the Hudson's Bay Company, which brought furs at great profit from sub-arctic America.

In the colonial area there was growth of old settlements and plantations and acquisition of new. Cromwell went to war with Spain and seized Jamaica which, after a slow beginning, became the Empire's greatest West Indian plantation. A syndicate of Charles II's great men founded the Carolinas on the American coast south of Virginia. The King's brother, the Duke of York, organized an expedition to take New Netherland, the Dutch colony filling the coastline between Maryland and New England. The stroke was successful, and the Duke became Lord Proprietor of New York, while the southern part of the conquest became the separate colonies of New Jersey and Delaware. William Penn the Quaker obtained leave to colonize higher up the Delaware River and founded Pennsylvania as a refuge for his persecuted sect. These new colonies were peopled without any great new ~~emigration~~ from England. Jamaica was set going by surplus population from Barbados and St Kitts. Barbadians and New



Englanders were prominent among the pioneers of Carolina. New York had a Dutch population who remained as English subjects and were joined by French Huguenots and Irish Catholics. Penn's Quakers were not numerous enough to fill Pennsylvania, and he sent out large numbers of Germans and Swiss to join them. In general it may be said that America was now to a great extent colonizing itself. The second generation of colonists was sufficiently numerous to open new colonies, and the home-produced element was growing less important. It was a preliminary sign of a great future development, nothing less than the growth of an American nation.

Statesmen were alive to the economic advantages of empire-building. The Commonwealth passed Navigation Acts to prevent the Dutch from trading with the colonies, and fought a Dutch war in consequence. Charles II passed more Navigation Acts and fought two more Dutch wars. The general outcome was that the Navigation Acts became a permanent part of the Empire's mechanism, and an all-round bargain was developed. England had the monopoly of trade with the colonies and at the same time paid for the Navy that defended them, while the colonies had the monopoly of the English markets for their plantation products; and at all stages the foreigner was severely frozen out. The Dutch wars were short but intense, and twenty years saw the end of them. Before that it was already apparent that the rival and menace of the future would be France.

Restoration England throve and prospered. Population at the close of the Stuart century was five and a half millions, a significant increase after the stagnation that had persisted since the Black Death. The mercantile marine doubled its tonnage in Charles II's reign, and manufactures began to employ an appreciable number of the people. The colonies and the East Indies, as has been said, were an indispensable background to all this, while none doubted that the Navy was its prime guarantee against disaster.

No more in the later Stuart period than in the earlier did prosperity and civil contentment go hand in hand. After twenty years of Puritan ascendancy the Cavaliers of the Restoration insisted on retaliating, and their Parliament passed severe and oppressive Acts against the nonconformists. Charles II agreed with private regret, for he was himself by no means in conformity with the Church of England.

In secret—and the secret was kept from the people until his death—he was a Roman Catholic. He sincerely desired the wealth and power of England, and much of them she owed to him. He desired also to make her a Catholic State and to rule her absolutely and despotically as his cousin Louis XIV ruled France. Charles worked hard and cleverly for these hidden ambitions. By fooling everybody, loyalists and opposition alike, and by extorting money from France for plans which Louis naturally approved, this most able of the Stuarts was an absolute ruler in the years before his death, although he had not yet ventured to show his hand in the religious question. Then he died suddenly at the age of fifty-five, and his brother James took up the running.

James II, more honest but less wise, made no secret of his Catholic faith or of his intention to have it tolerated in England. Protestants held that toleration would be only a step to domination, and in the then condition of Europe they were probably right. The warring parties of the nonconformists and the Church of England, Protestants both, therefore united for a moment to deal with James II. In their political aspect the two Protestant parties were known as the Whigs and the Tories, inveterate foes. But James forced a crisis in 1688 and they had to unite. Together they invited William of Orange, his daughter's husband, from Holland, and together they backed William in expelling James and assuming the crown in 1689. The Bill of Rights and the Toleration Act of that year ratified the decision and laid down the future plan of the constitution: no more balance between crown and Parliament, but Parliament to be clearly superior; and no more persecution of Protestants by Protestants (and in practice, very little of Catholics). Freedom had made a stride forward. The Bill of Rights, with some amendments in the later Act of Settlement, enshrined what orators were accustomed to call "the principles of the glorious Revolution" for two generations to come.

### *5. Eighteenth-Century Civilization and Disruption*

Freedom had made a stride forward; and the preservation of freedom continued to be the most interesting subject to political England in the eighteenth century, and the one on which it was most sensitive

and prone to take alarm. In spite of this, there was no tendency to extend the good work already done, to give active political rights to classes yet unenfranchised. Political power was limited to the higher landowning and commercial people, with a somewhat scanty infusion of literary and professional men. They saw no reason to extend it to the rest of the middle class, or to the wage-earners and peasants. It was not that they were consciously selfish, but simply that the social structure made their attitude seem inevitably right. The great majority of Englishmen were villagers, making their living in an agriculture whose rules and methods were traditional and well known. For harmonious working, good and generous leadership by the greater landowners was essential, and, having that, the small man was not concerned to assert his own voice in national politics. He was highly interested in them, much more so than were his counterparts in continental countries, but he regarded his squire or his great county family as representing him, even though he had no vote to record for them. If he had had a vote he would have given it to the same member who now went to Westminster without it, so that there was no practical grievance.

For three-quarters of the eighteenth century this happy condition of stationary liberty prevailed. But, based upon a static society, it would not stand the strain of economic upheaval or the alteration of social values; and when those conditions should arise, a revolutionary period was due.

On the party political plane, even the earlier eighteenth century was no time of placid calm. Whigs and Tories had combined to assert the constitution against James II's absolutism, but the alliance was brief. The Whigs had indeed got most out of it, for the Toleration Act represented the victory of their side in religious disputes. The Tories or Church of England party were very loath to admit that nonconformity had a right to exist, and their Occasional Conformity Act (1711) and Schism Act (1714) marked an attempt to revive religious persecution. But the great nobles, the heads of the ruling class, perceived that intolerance of this sort had an affinity with absolutism and might well pave the way for a Stuart restoration. They were determined never to submit to a despotism again, and so they threw their weight on the Whig side. The Tory triumph was

but momentary, although the Tories were undoubtedly a majority of the politically conscious people in the country; and in 1714 a long Whig ascendancy set in, to endure until a quite different set of motives should govern political divisions. Within that ascendancy there were clashes between diverse Whig leaders and factions, which supplied the place of the less active warfare between the two parties.

Externally the new age opened in 1689 with the long struggle against Louis XIV. Louis, absolute ruler of France, was determined to be the dictator of Europe, and his aggressions and sharp practice against weaker states had created a European combination against him. The military leader of the coalition was William of Orange. By obtaining the English throne he brought the wealth and sea power of England into the struggle. Louis at the same time supported the exiled Stuarts and would have restored them had he won. The fight against Louis for "the liberties of Europe" (William's phrase) was thus an aspect of the fight against James II for the liberties of England.

There were two wars, the first conducted by William III to an indecisive end in which Louis was foiled but not routed; then a five years' interval at the close of which William died; and then a second war which almost exactly coincided with the reign of Anne (1702-1714) and in which John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, led England and Europe to victory. Marlborough's battles—Blenheim and the rest—raised British military reputation high, although the British troops formed only the high-quality core in his armies. No less essential was the supremacy of the Navy, which drove the French fleets from the seas and maintained the commercial wealth of England and the life of the armies. During the struggle there occurred in 1707 the Union of the kingdoms of England and Scotland, henceforward under the common Parliament and government of Great Britain, the termination of an age-old weakness and danger to both nations. By 1713 France was exhausted and the French monarchy permanently injured. Great Britain was war-weary and disillusioned, but richer and stronger than ever; with a national debt that seemed staggering (fifty million pounds), but with a trade that had increased and was increasing out of all proportion to the growth of population.

The Treaty of Utrecht registered the maritime ascendancy even more than the military victories. France lost not an acre in Europe,

and Louis XIV's grandson was recognized as King of Spain; but the French were kept out of the Netherlands and Northern Italy, which they had begun the war by invading. On the sea the British Navy secured Gibraltar and Minorca, bases which confirmed the hold on the Mediterranean that had been a decisive factor in the war. Across the ocean France yielded to Great Britain her ancient colony of Acadia, thenceforward called Nova Scotia; her share of Newfoundland, with some fishing rights reserved; and all claim to the shores and forts of Hudson Bay. By a separate bargain Spain granted to Great Britain the *asiento* or monopoly of supplying slaves to the Spanish colonies, the prize which had tempted John Hawkins long before. It did not turn out to be a valuable concession.

More than ever now the life of Great Britain depended on sea power. Her population was no more than one-third of that of France, the greatest military power of the continent. In the years of Marlborough's victories the British army had been ridiculously small, prevailing by its quality and the inspiration it gave to its allies. As soon as peace came it was cut to almost nothing, for the English ruling class, sensitive about liberty, were convinced that it was unsafe to allow the crown any more troops than were necessary for police purposes. This fear and dislike of a great army, differentiating the British from the nations of the continent, has remained a permanent characteristic to our own time. Although it has had some obvious disadvantages, it may on the long view have proved a fortunate factor in the national mentality. Just as there was no army, there were also no fixed defences. Not a city in England possessed fortifications comparable to those that surrounded scores of places on the Rhine and the France-Netherlands frontiers. By all the rules of continental warfare England was naked to her enemies. Yet they had found her covered by a crystal shield that they could not penetrate. Her merchantmen sailed every ocean, and her plantations and trading factories dotted the world's map. Her rich young men made the grand tour through Europe, confidently examining and assessing, buying the best pictures and recruiting tenors and musicians, making everywhere an impression not of parvenu arrogance but of ripened good taste. How was it done? France and Europe began to ask the question. Here was an attractive society and a fascinating liberty of

person, thought and speech. The French looked to politics for the answer. Voltaire pointed to religious toleration and Montesquieu accounted for the British success by a misconceived version of the British constitution. Philosophers left out of account the Navy, for there were no books to tell them about it, and in peace its ships were laid up and its men scattered over the trade-routes.

After a period of uneasy peace in Walpole's time, the mid-eighteenth century brought two more wars with France and Spain, the twin Bourbon monarchies. The first, in the 'forties, ended with the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748; the second, the Seven Years War, with the Peace of Paris in 1763. The European aspect of these wars, in which France tried and failed to gain conquests in the Netherlands and ascendancy in Germany, was not in detail of the first importance to England. But the oceanic aspect was, for it was a stage in the evolution of industrial England, the British Empire and the United States.

First, however, the Walpole peace claims attention. Fastidious people dislike Sir Robert Walpole for his coarse tastes and bawdy conversation, his main-chance policies, his acceptance and use of men as he found them. He had no ideals and did nothing to elevate or adorn. But the British world owed him much. He had the virtues of his defects. Because he had no ideals he had no liking for extremes. His great work was to get the nation so used to tolerance that it became a settled feature of the national character. He prevented religious persecution of the dissenters by the Church. Toleration had been enacted in 1689, but the Tories had repented of it. Walpole fixed it for ever. He promoted also political toleration, without which there can be no true liberty even under the most democratic constitution. When he was a boy, in the reign of Charles II, men were being executed for belonging to the defeated political party, and those who joined Monmouth's rebellion against James II were hanged by the hundred. The practice grew milder after the revolution of 1689, but still the inter-party rancour was beyond modern conception. Walpole changed it. He knew that to deprive opponents of any future hope in their own country was to drive them into the ranks of its enemies. Exile had taken the place of execution, but he did not believe in exile. He allowed the Tory leader Bolingbroke,

tainted with treason though he was, to return from France and live in peace, and even to take part in opposition politics once more. British politics ceased to be bloody and proscriptive and became a contest in which men alternated between in and out. Speeches were often hot and brutal, but action was commonly generous. The outs did get their views considered, even while they reviled the ins with vigour. In this practice of political tolerance the British can claim to have discovered a principle which even yet is not appreciated at its full value by all the world.

Externally also Walpole preserved the peace. He shared to the full the dislike of his time for a military force, and realized that in war you must have one; unlike some of his jingo opponents, who shouted for war with the Bourbons and at the same moment moved a reduction of the Army. Walpole was against doing anything by the sword. He saw trade and wealth increasing under his rule of tolerant non-interference, the colonies growing, the ships multiplying, industry expanding. He was content with an unenterprising peace, denounced so hotly by the younger politicians. They wanted to use the wealth and the ships to conquer colonies and more wealth. At length they had their way. The anti-Bourbon war that began in 1739 was the end of the only long period of international peace that eighteenth-century England had to show. It had lasted (with a brief exception) for twenty-six years.

With the declaration of war the interest shifts to the Empire. All its factors had become proportionately greater since the seventeenth century. The old East India Company, the favourite of the later Stuarts, suffered on that account after 1689, when Parliament granted a charter to a new company composed of the former interlopers. But the old company had the goodwill and experience and put up a stiff fight. The end was an amalgamation to form the United East India Company in 1709. This was the body that created British India in the century-and-a-half to follow. There were now three head factories or presidencies—Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, each with satellite posts, tapping the trade of large interior regions. The French had formed an East India Company under Louis XIV and possessed Chandernagore, a rival to Calcutta, and Pondicherry adjacent to Madras. For individuals India was a supreme gamble.

Young men went out there to die young or come homé rich. Most of them died, and the few survivors were quite determined on the riches, a circumstance that led to some lurid transactions.

The mid-century wars had a decisive effect in India. The French under Dupleix, governor of Pondicherry, struck for the monopoly of Indian enterprise and the expulsion of the British. They took Madras in 1746, but had to give it back by treaty two years later. Dupleix then started an unauthorized war in time of peace and made great headway towards evicting the British and establishing his own power all over southern India. The valour and leadership of Robert Clive turned the scale, and Dupleix, after being well beaten, was recalled in disgrace by his own employers. India at this time was in a chaotic condition, the titular Mogul or Emperor powerless, and the provinces at the mercy of military adventurers. Their followers were mere brigands, and against Europeans displayed little fighting power. The fortunes of Indian states as populous as European kingdoms were decided by handfuls of British or French soldiers, seldom in any action a thousand strong.

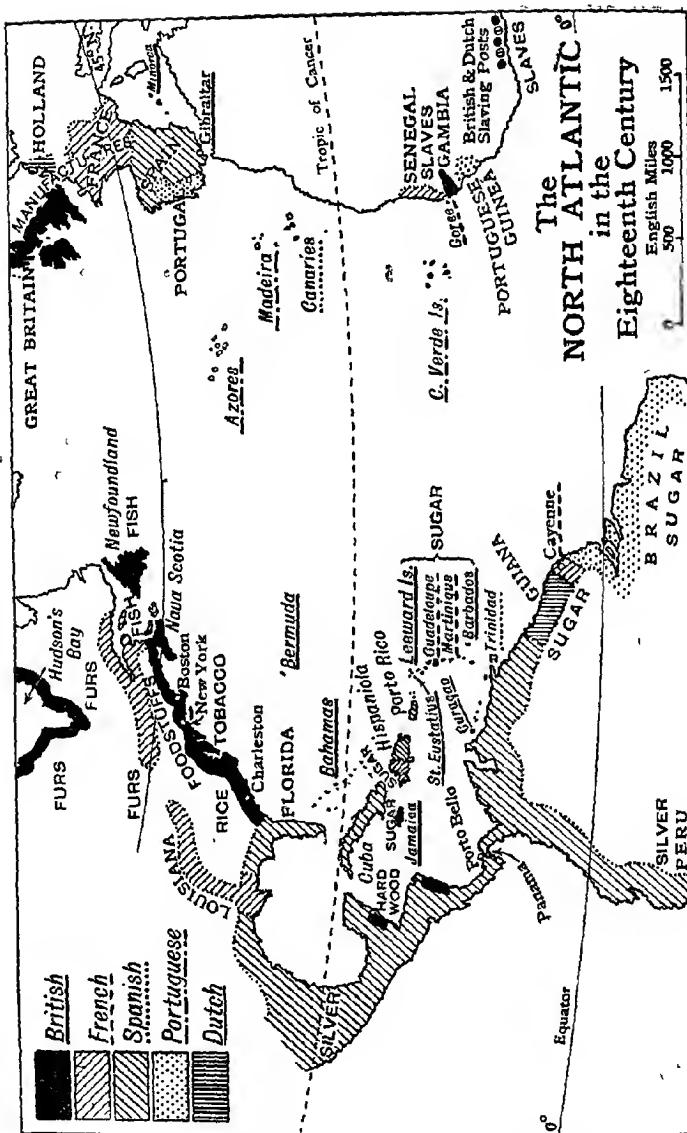
In the Seven Years War the French made another push to clear the British out of southern India. It was defeated by Sir Eyre Coote at the decisive battle of Wandewash, after which the victor took Pondicherry and French power was at an end. Pondicherry was afterwards restored, but the British control of this part of the country was permanent, for they had the native government in their pocket. Meanwhile, farther north, the rich province of Bengal witnessed decisive events. Its ruler captured the British factory of Calcutta and killed most of his prisoners. Clive went from Madras and recovered Calcutta, took the French factory of Chandernagore, and routed the whole army of Bengal at the battle of Plassey. He then set up a puppet nabob as a screen behind which the British controlled the province. The two wars thus established British power in two regions of India and permanently broke French power. After this there followed an increase in the Company's trade and revenues, and a phenomenal bout of fortune-making by its servants, accompanied by some scandals on which Parliament had to pronounce judgement in due course.

The colonial part of the British Empire was distributed on the

coasts and islands of the North Atlantic: on the African side, slaving posts for the transmission of labour to the plantations; in the Caribbean, Jamaica and the British sugar colonies of the Lesser Antilles; on the American continent, the plantations from Georgia north to Maryland; next to them the Middle Colonies, sometimes called the bread colonies, of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware; north again, New England. The Treaty of Utrecht had added the fringes of Canada, but the heart of it, Quebec and Montreal on the St. Lawrence, remained French until the Seven Years War.

The plantations, and particularly the West Indian sugar plantations, were reckoned the most valuable of the possessions. They sent home to England stuff that provided employment in refineries and distilleries and could be profitably resold to the non-colonial peoples of Europe. Until the middle of the century the West Indian trade was richer than the East Indian, but after Clive's conquests the East Indies drew ahead. In the mainland plantations Georgia and the Carolinas grew rice, and Virginia and Maryland tobacco. The great days of American cotton had not yet come. The bread colonies and New England supplied foodstuffs for the plantations, which did not grow their own. The timber of these coasts provided shipbuilding material. The New England shipyards sold multitudes of merchantmen to Europe and maintained an American mercantile marine whereby, under the protection of the Navy and the Navigation Acts, the merchants of Boston and New York shared the profits made by London and Bristol. Newfoundland sent its salt fish everywhere, to feed the people of England in the winter scarcity of meat, the Catholics of southern Europe in Lent, and the slaves on the plantations at all times. The factors of the Hudson's Bay Company competed with French pioneers from Montreal for the traffic with the northern Indians. Furs were the prize, and beaver skins from which hats were made for all Christendom:

The American mainland colonies were growing rapidly in population. The increase was roughly a doubling of numbers every twenty years, beginning with about 200,000 in 1700. By 1760 this yielded a total of one and a half millions. The economic effect was to provide an entirely new market for English manufactures. The political effect was to create a growing sense of American nationality and impatience



of outside control. Personal liberty was as great and political liberty in some respects greater than in old England, but it was not resting on a static society when population was increasing in a geometrical progression. It is not surprising that the first of the great changes was destined to occur in the colonies.

First, however, the French question had to be settled. The French were there in Canada, and down in the south in Louisiana too. They determined to seize the intervening territory, the basins of the Ohio and Mississippi, and cut off the British on the Atlantic coast from any westward expansion. If it was British aggression in 1739, it was French in 1749-56 which forced on the Seven Years War. At first the French succeeded and the British public became somewhat unreasonably panic-stricken, for at the worst there was no real danger of losing the colonies. Then William Pitt came into power in England, and the aspect of the war was changed. He blockaded the French fleets, subsidized the continental foe of France, Frederick of Prussia, and directed the main weight of British arms against Canada. France, although fighting hard in Europe, had much the greater military power. But she could not get it to the scene of action, for she had lost the command of the sea. Wolfe and his colleagues conquered Canada, and all the West to the banks of the Mississippi was secured to British expansion—or so it seemed. In the Caribbean and in Africa the Bourbons yielded yet more of the tropical possessions that fascinated the mercantile mind, while India had become a British option. The unreflecting jingoes of the period trumpeted their triumph, but some men were ill at ease.

After the Seven Years War a sense of strain and impending change pervaded the British world. The East India Company was strained by its new territorial power, and some bad things were done by its fortune-hunting servants in Bengal. Various changes and experiments in administration seemed ineffective, while a party in British politics insisted on inquiring into everything and subjecting the Company to closer government control. Great strains arose in the American colonies with their expanding population and their more than doubled territory, their problems of trade control and their shifting position in the imperial mercantile system. British political society at home, hitherto steady-going, became a snarling chaos in the early

years of George III, the great Whig ascendancy breaking up, the King forming a party to assert his personal influence, the new rich from India streaming home to buy estates and seats in Parliament, the London merchant-owners of sugar plantations competing in the same market, the population beginning to multiply on a scale unprecedented, and growing sections of it ceasing to be a contented peasantry and becoming wage-earners under capitalist employers. The years from the Treaty of Paris in 1763 to the beginning of the War of American Independence are so packed with new problems and controversies that it is difficult to remember that there were only twelve of them. The smooth-flowing eighteenth century was fast approaching its Niagara.

The colonies led the way. After the Peace of 1763 the British government under George Grenville saw that the conquests had radically altered the Empire, and attempted some constructive statesmanship. In the great new belt between the old frontier and the Mississippi the interests of the Red Indians were to be respected and settlement by white men not allowed unless under very strict conditions. Some clauses of the Navigation Acts which did not suit the colonists had become almost a dead letter, and the whole system was overhauled, brought up to date, and enforced. About seven thousand troops were required for defence of the new western frontiers against unsubdued Indians, and for garrison of the Atlantic coast against possible European enemies. Grenville held that the colonies ought to pay a small part of the cost, and imposed the Stamp Tax to that effect. The Stamp Tax was an innovation because it was a direct internal tax enacted by the British Parliament. Although its purpose was reasonable and justifiable, its method was a breach of the constitution and "the principles of the Glorious Revolution"; for British subjects were being taxed without any grant by their representatives. The colonists' representation was not in Parliament but in the colonial Assemblies, which had had nothing to do with the Stamp Act.

Indignation against all these measures was concentrated in resistance to the tax, whose collection was prevented by popular movements in all the mainland colonies. The next British government, with a moderation surprising in that age, repealed the Stamp

Act, but things had been said that could not be unsaid, and the rift widened as time went on. The Americans began to believe that the status of colonists was necessarily inferior, for it involved administration from without. They were unsatisfied by the liberty whose existence had been demonstrated in the success of the Stamp Tax resistance. Their advanced leaders desired that the colonies should provide their own administration. They did not at that stage disclaim allegiance to the King or display enmity towards the people of Great Britain. The modern term for what they wanted is dominion status; but that has taken a century to shape and had not then been thought of. The British government and public opinion on their side were hurt and puzzled, like a man who is unexpectedly attacked by a friend. They had had no intention of being tyrannical, and the bitter words from America opened a breach that was hard to close. It was an age when such words between individuals meant drawn swords and a duel, and the moderation of public men was therefore creditable. But the hurt was there, and with new provocations the tone hardened. Provocations multiplied on both sides, and exasperation with them. The state of the colonies became one of chronic defiance. George III and his ministers determined on repression by force. Ten years after the passing of the Stamp Act the first shots were fired at Lexington. One year later still the Congress of Americans at Philadelphia issued the Declaration of Independence.

The strain of these years had produced a rift at home. The old steadiness of eighteenth-century politics was gone. George III was reviving the royal power, not by challenging that of Parliament, but by forming a party of his own adherents within Parliament. By 1770 his King's Friends had the majority, and his minister, Lord North, became head of the government. The Whigs, disrupted and driven from power after half a century, cried aloud that liberty was overthrown and set themselves by every means to defeat the King. When the King went to war with his colonists in 1775 the Whigs, under Fox and Burke, openly backed the King's enemies and cheered their successes. The eighteenth century was ending in a bad breakdown.

Thus disunited, the country had little chance to win a great war, for that was what the conflict became. France and Spain, the Bourbon

powers, took part against Great Britain as soon as they saw that the colonists would not easily be beaten. In France there was a genuine sympathy for the republicans of America—an ominous symptom in an absolute monarchy—and in both there was a determination to ruin the British Empire and take back the possessions formerly lost to it. The Dutch also joined the hostile ranks, and the powers of northern and eastern Europe combined in the Armed Neutrality to thwart British blockading measures by sea. We had against us all the world that counted, and no ally. Sea power was not on the British side as in all other modern wars, for the Navy had been neglected in the party struggles and its command weakened by political intrigue. French fleets ranged the oceans, attacked the West Indies, and carried expeditionary forces to America and India. In 1779 they even commanded the Channel and saw—and missed—the chance of invading England. French sea power performed the crucial act in deciding the war in America by cutting the communications of Lord Cornwallis's southern army and compelling his surrender at Yorktown. After that the British Navy began to recover its form and to hit France and Spain in all directions. The lost West Indies were recovered, Gibraltar saved, and the challenge to India foiled. In sum, both the British and the Bourbon powers lost the war. The only winners were the Americans, who made good their independent nationhood. The other combatants departed with humbled pride, crippling debts and discredited political systems. Great changes were certain to follow. A revolutionary age had begun.

## II

## THE AGE OF TRANSFORMATION

1. *A Survey of the Great Changes*

A REVOLUTIONARY age was in fact proceeding, but few people in the 1780's were aware of it. The colonial revolution was a finished episode, and the other revolutions did not yet appear as such to the men of the time, although they are so seen by later generations. In one respect indeed, History in the large, as a view of mankind's fortunes, has not even yet given the generality a true conception of what took place. We habitually think and talk of Modern History as having begun about the end of the fifteenth century and continued to the present day. That is to apply the same label to two very different things; for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the life of mankind are a period utterly different from the seventeenth and eighteenth, much more different than those were from anything that had gone before, even back to the days of feudal villeinage. If the eighteenth century is Modern History, the nineteenth needs a new name that has not yet been devised. The transition time is the forty years from the Declaration of Independence to the fall of Napoleon, where the old and the new overlap.

The growth of population alone has been sufficient to make the later time different in kind from anything that went before. In round figures the story is as follows. After the Black Death the country—that is, England and Wales—took two centuries, to the end of the Tudor period, to recover its pre-Death number of about 4 millions. Another hundred years, to about 1700, saw the population at  $5\frac{1}{2}$  millions. By 1750 it had become  $6\frac{1}{2}$ . The rate of increase had been slowly rising. Thenceforward it rose very rapidly, in a manner unprecedented in the past history of any European country. In 1770 the figure—still for England and Wales—was  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions; in 1790,  $8\frac{3}{4}$ ; in 1811, 10; in 1831,  $13\frac{3}{4}$ ; in 1851,  $17\frac{1}{2}$ . By 1891 a somewhat slower expansion had reached 29, and by 1941,  $41\frac{1}{2}$  millions. In Scotland in 1750 there were about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  million people; in 1811,  $1\frac{3}{4}$

millions; in 1851, 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ ; in 1891, 4; and in 1941, 5. Irish statistics, subject to different governing conditions, have taken a very different course, and will be alluded to on a later page. The increase of numbers in Great Britain has not in general histories received the emphasis it deserves as a factor differentiating the recent period from the past. Nevertheless it is obvious that a country whose people were multiplied more than sixfold in less than two hundred years must have undergone vast changes on that account. We may bear it in mind as a background while surveying those changes in their novel earlier phases.

Throughout her history until this period England had produced her own foodstuffs and had generally had some to spare for export. The rise of population destroyed that favourable condition, and about 1790 the country crossed the line of self-sufficiency and became in permanent and increasing need of food imports. The date of the transition would have been earlier, and its speed much quicker, but for the agricultural improvements and changes known collectively as the agricultural revolution. These resulted in the production of more food and also in some bad social consequences; for they extinguished multitudes of petty landowners or people enjoying rights of some sort in the land and reduced them to the status of wage-earning labourers suffering great hardship and underpayment. The agricultural revolution did increase production, but not sufficiently to keep pace with population. When the need for imports arose it could not be satisfied owing to war and obstructive interests, and a hungry period set in for the mass of the people, more prolonged than they had ever experienced before.

The nature of British commerce was changing. Woollen cloth, the greatest export of older times, was still important, but no longer predominant. Its chief outlet was to continental Europe, and it was accompanied by an increasing variety of other manufactures and re-exported colonial produce. Trade with distant parts of the world was much more rapidly expanding and changing its functions. Originally a small-scale quest for treasure and luxuries, such as the spices so prominent in Elizabethan projects, it had become by the late eighteenth century an import of raw materials in bulk and of produce that had ceased to be luxury and was now of ordinary con-

sumption. Its export sought markets in every part of the world for the growing output of British manufacturers. Its imports of raw cotton, sugar, tobacco, rum, dyestuffs, saltpetre, whale oil, hides, coffee, tea were among the materials and products that now stimulated industry and the growing population. These things were now necessities, because large numbers of people had come to depend upon handling them for their living. If supplies had been cut off, economic collapse would have followed. The intake of raw cotton and tea leapt upwards in the last twenty years of the eighteenth century and the increase continued in the nineteenth. Tea then came exclusively from China, and the China trade, virtually a new one, became more valuable than the Indian, while the whole volume of Eastern business shot ahead of the old plantation trades in the Atlantic. This circumstance had great effects on British action in the Napoleonic wars. The British Empire was not destroyed by the American secession, but it turned its energies eastward.

Industry was linked with commerce. In the old economy the cloth industry had also been linked with agriculture, for the spinning and weaving had been nation-wide part-time occupations of those who worked primarily on the land. Now the whole industry drew apart into special districts and was manned by whole-time workers. Cotton was a new manufacture originating in the early eighteenth century. It was the earliest to be organized in factories and to make use of mechanical inventions. It took possession of Lancashire and created a great industrial population which has never ceased to expand. The Birmingham district became an area of metal-workers developing out of the nail- and chain-making craftsmen of earlier times. Factory organization took possession of it as the nineteenth century opened, and it had already been the birthplace of James Watt's steam engines. The coalfields, first near the coast and then inland, became a first-rank industry. Two things necessitated a vastly increased output of coal: the old domestic uses of wood and peat for fuel were no longer adequate with the population growing and the woodlands diminishing; and the discovery was made about 1740 that coal could be used for smelting iron. From about 1770 all these factors interacted with greater vigour. Textile industry needed machines, machines needed iron, iron needed coal and, finally, they all demanded better transport.

Better transport was not only the fulfilment of a demand of the earlier phase of industrialism, but obviously it quickened and vitalized the subsequent phases. In this great transition period it began with scientific road-making under turnpike trusts which recouped the expense by charging tolls to traffic. Then there followed and overlapped a fifty-years period of cutting canals and improving rivers to accommodate barge traffic. And lastly, about 1830, commenced the railway age. In twenty years from that date the main lines of the national railway system were laid down. The railways entirely superseded long-distance road transport for the next three-quarters of a century (until about 1920), and they checked the growth of the canal system and put many of the canals out of business. While industry was evoking a revolution in land transport, it should not be forgotten that commerce had been steadily improving its methods of transport by sea. Sailing-ships were being made faster by various improvements, and navigators were achieving speedier voyages by learning more about ocean winds and currents. By 1850 these developments caused the sailing passage round the Cape to India to take half the time it had done in 1750, and with very much greater safety to life and health. Beyond that the development of steam shipping was going on rapidly, together with telegraphic communication and cheap, dependable letter posts (both from about 1840). While recognizing the steamship as the revolutionary innovation on the sea, we should not forget the steady evolution of the sailing-ship, which remained the carrier of many of the passengers and nearly all the goods until the second half of the nineteenth century was well advanced.

Together with the material changes outlined above, there were proceeding some revolutionary developments in thought and sentiment. The mercantile ideas of the old colonial Empire were being attacked at the same time as the Americans were striking for political independence. Adam Smith published his *Wealth of Nations* in 1776. It was a reasoned attack on nearly all the doctrines of mercantilism, which the author declared to be materially ineffective and morally corrupting. Other thinkers agreed, and in the next generation a belief in free trade and a distrust of state interference became widespread. By the mid-nineteenth century this revolution was destined

to be complete. The regulation of colonial trade, the fostering of British shipping by law, the protection of home industry by tariffs, were all abolished.

The religious outlook of the eighteenth century was of more than spiritual importance, for it had large effects on national conduct. The Toleration Act and the Tory failure to undermine it had settled religious disputes. This had the unlooked-for consequence that in the earlier part of the century religion, deprived of its political stimulus, lost its hold on people of all classes. In the higher ranks men ceased to believe in the punitive sanctions of Christianity, while the masses became sheer pagans, giving no thought at all to the matter. John Wesley and his associates changed the popular attitude by magnetic preaching campaigns in which their audiences were imbued with a lively sense of sin and disgrace and of the unpleasant consequences entailed. Thus in the second half of the century England, and still more Wales, recovered a working belief in a Methodist religion of Protestant type, influenced by the gospels rather than by the Old Testament of the fighting Puritans. The same revival of belief spread later among the upper classes, resulting not in the increase of nonconformity but in the Evangelical ingredient thence-forward permanent in the Church of England.

The very important humanitarian movement was an outgrowth of revived religion. In 1730 it would have been fairly useless to speak to England on the wrongs of negro slaves; the answer would have been entirely cynical. Fifty years later Granville Sharp and William Wilberforce launched an attempt to end the slave trade with well-grounded hopes of success. They produced evidence of cruelty and suffering and appealed to conscience to stop it. The answer of the slavers was to deny the cruelty, not, as it would have been in Walpole's time, to justify it by the profits. That being so, the victory of the emancipators was certain, for they could prove their case. The new French wars caused delay, and the law prohibiting the slave trade was not passed until 1807. Evangelicals and Methodists carried humanitarianism further by establishing the great missionary societies in the closing decade of the eighteenth century. The missions were destined to have an enormous effect on the colonial Empire and on the views of the British population at home. Less markedly

of religious inspiration, but rather of a growing sense of civilized obligation, was the interest in Indian affairs. Misgovernment followed on Clive's conquests. It did not pass unchallenged in Parliament. The accepted standard of conduct for Englishmen in India was changed almost overnight, so that Clive found himself censured for actions that none would have questioned when he performed them. The rich men retired from India—known as the nabobs—became a suspected class; and the public indignation culminated in the trial of Warren Hastings for tyranny and extortion. This was a misguided effort, for Hastings, although a man of no refinement of conscience, was not a tyrant, and had improved the condition of British India in a very difficult period. Humanitarianism looked first to abuses reported from far distant scenes and was somewhat slower to turn its attention to evils under its own eyes. When it did so it found mighty causes to contest—prison reform, law reform, child labour equivalent to slavery, the treatment of the helpless poor, social cruelty of all sorts.

In sum, a social conscience was developing such as had never existed in time past. That should not involve censure of earlier men. Standards change rapidly and often by some unidentifiable spontaneous agency. What was tolerable yesterday is wrong to-day, and one advance springs from another. The sequence observable in the 1770's still continues.

Connected with the humanitarian and social developments was that found in art and literature. It is hard to define, and any definition is riddled with exceptions. But briefly the change was from reason to sentiment, from precision to atmosphere, from the head to the heart. Huge exceptions must be made, and it is by no means true that the earlier eighteenth century was all head and no heart—one thinks of Wolfe before Quebec and of Gray who wrote the Elegy which Wolfe repeated to men whose hearts responded to every word of it. Yet the eighteenth century had a harder side which was perhaps more characteristic. It had what seems to us a queer estimate of the beauties of Nature. Its shops sold multitudes of prints showing "views" of mansions set in parks or towns set in landscapes of a peculiar conventional style. These views preclude the belief that those who bought them had any more sentiment for natural beauty

than a town planner or estate agent has now. The same period produced a great deal of town-bred poetry about rustic life, full of "swains" and "wains" and standardized periphrases like "the finny tribe" (fish); and even if there was not much reason in such exercises, there was certainly no heart. And then in the last, dozen years set in a change, to continue and grow as the nineteenth century progressed. Men's hearts grew warm to the beauty of Nature and human worth. To depict sorrow and misfortune was no longer an exercise in elegant diction, but a flame of indignation. To wax enthusiastic for a cause became the mark of a generous man. It was the romantic movement, destined to do great things for fifty years. It was not merely artistic and literary, it was humanitarian and liberal, a symptom that the heart was overcoming the head. We may visualize it in terms of personal appearance. The purchasers of "views" wore powdered wigs and breeches tight at the knees, skirted coats with many formal buttons, and shirts with stiffly frilled collars and sleeves. The public of Wordsworth and Scott, Constable and George Morland wore trousers and their natural hair (both ill cut), short unornamented coats and shapeless shirt-collars. Trousers became universal as the nineteenth century set in. They are the symbol of its difference from all the old life before. A little later came the cylindrical or stove-pipe hat, no less characteristic of the allied phase of industry and evangelicism, and destined to hold sway for eighty years.

Such is a selection of the movements that preluded the ultra-modern world in which we live. The greatest has not been mentioned—the political revolution. It comprehends and transcends all the others and cannot usefully be summarized in a few words. It is an ever-present subject in the chapters that follow.

## 2. *The Economic Revolution in Great Britain*

In the later Middle Ages west-central Europe was crossed from north to south by a broad band of commercial and manufacturing cities, stretching from the Netherlands, through the Rhineland and south-western Germany, into the plain of northern Italy and on to Florence and its satellites. In this broad traffic-lane (for such it was) were gathered the cream of the craftsmanship, business enterprise

and civilly-won wealth of Christendom. An imaginative map-maker might have named it the Avenue of the Arts of Peace. At either end of the line ran the sea communications, along the northern and southern coasts of the European peninsula. The southern sea route, from the Italian seaports to the Levant, made contact with the traders of Asia, and Europeans obtained from them the costly wares that excited mercantile imaginations in every country.

From this arose the ambition to find an all-European route by some unbroken oceanic passage to the Far East. The Portuguese found the long way round the Cape of Good Hope to the Indian Ocean. The Spaniards under Columbus and the English under Cabot tried for a short way westwards across the Atlantic to China. They found America and the West Indies instead. The Cape route to Asia superseded the Far Eastern trade through the Levant. The Atlantic nations of Europe—ultimately five of them, Spain, Portugal, France, England and Holland—outstripped the German and Italian trading cities, developed American and West Indian plantations fed by African labour, and accumulated great new commercial wealth and supplies of gold and silver from American mines. This shift of influence from central and Mediterranean to Atlantic Europe was a preliminary to the vast changes that have followed.

The exploiting powers of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans fought one another for the greatest shares of these prizes. After two centuries Great Britain and France emerged the substantial winners, and finally in the duel for empire fought out in the Seven Years War the British obtained decisive new advantages. The greatest was the future control of India and its use as a base for making headway in China and south-eastern Asia.

The result of all this was that in the eighteenth century, and particularly after the Seven Years War, British trade grew at a phenomenal rate. That is to say, it increased very much faster than did the total population. Many more of the people than in the past found themselves working to produce goods for overseas markets, or manufacturing raw materials brought from the ends of the earth, or re-exporting plantation or Indian goods to European countries. The merchant class which conducted this trade grew rich, and its wealth was in a different form from that of the territorial nobles who, in

command of the Whigs, watched over the liberties of England. Their great incomes came from rent-rolls, and their capital was the land itself, fixed and immobile capital, not easily available for any other sort of enterprise. Mercantile wealth, on the contrary, was fluid, frequently shifted from one enterprise to another, easily negotiable in the form of bank deposits, letters of credit, bills of exchange. This new fluid capital was to prove itself the greatest moulding force of human society.

Merchants had grown rich before and had traded to some extent in manufactured goods. But the money-making trades of the past had been in luxuries for the few, and for the most part these had been natural products. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for the first time in history, commodities in bulk began to be carried long distances for the use of whole populations. The incoming cargoes were natural products, tobacco, sugar, tea, raw cotton and the rest. They had ultimately to be balanced or paid for by the export of manufactures. Long-distance markets for manufactures were increasing, not only among the North American and West Indian colonists, counted by millions as the eighteenth century progressed, but among the Spaniards and Portuguese of Latin America, and some of the peoples of Asia. Even the African slave trade involved export of all kinds of cheap weapons and metal goods as payment to Africans for the bodies of fellow Africans, and so did the Hudson's Bay traffic for furs with the Red Indians. Added to these outlets were a growing command of European markets, obtained by the prestige of sea power and the improving quality and variety of British goods; and, above all, an expanding home market among a multiplying population with mounting wealth, wants and standards of life. In sum, the new commerce was inseparably linked with manufacture as former commerce had not been, and both increased together.

This involved at first no sudden revolution. Some of the effects can be seen as rudiments in the sixteenth century, and are more plainly evident in the seventeenth. In the early eighteenth they grow important, and after its middle years they enter on a revolutionary period of intensified, almost violent, development. What were these effects? First there was a prolonged transitional period when the old-style domestic craftsmen ceased to be their own masters and were

employed by capitalists on piecework. Then came organization of production in large-scale factories, employing labour in the mass at fixed wages; the grouping of such undertakings in specialized towns or industrial areas; the creation of an urban working class, living often in bad conditions, and regimented as peasants had never been. The phenomena are to be seen in their crudest form in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A great part of the nineteenth century witnesses crusades and campaigns for the remedy of successive industrial abuses and grievances, and such activities continue to this day. But in the main they had won their battles and re-created a tolerable life for the ordinary man well before the nineteenth century ended. His aspirations since then have been directed to attaining a life that shall be more than merely tolerable, a life such as mankind never expected or even imagined in the past.

In making these general statements we should always keep in mind the numbers affected. About 1750 not more than one-sixth of the people of Great Britain (*i.e.* England, Wales and Scotland) were urban; the others lived and worked upon the land. By 1800 the proportion was about one-third townsmen to two-thirds countrymen. By 1850 it was about half and half. To-day seven-eighths of us are town-dwellers. Industrialized society has become an urbanized society.

There is another factor in the industrial revolution, and that is the invention of machinery. It was not an originating cause, but it was in the later stage an intensifier of the process; and it has gone on accumulating importance without surcease until now it has become a giant phenomenon dominating man's present life and filling the prospect of his future. Why did an age of machinery begin in the eighteenth century? The great scientific men of seventeenth-century England, from Francis Bacon to Isaac Newton, with their counterparts in other countries, discovered some fundamental truths in chemistry and physics and by their example trained a section of the educated in the ways of scientific thought. The Royal Society, chartered by Charles II in 1662, was one of the results, and a cause of much future advance. This work was preliminary to the utilization of steam power, and steam engines could have been rapidly developed before the seventeenth century was done. But practical in-

ventions are responses to a demand, and the quickening of commerce and manufacture had not yet gone far enough to make one. A good example of a demand creating a machine, even in an unscientific age, is the printing press, invented in the fifteenth century to meet the demand of the Renaissance for more books. A demand of the early eighteenth century created the earliest steam engines for the pumping of water out of deeper mine-workings. Next they were applied to producing air-blast for the furnaces in which iron was newly, being smelted by the heat of coal.

Meanwhile a crop of industrial inventions was being made in the textile industries. These ideas were such as needed no scientific background, and many of the inventors were men of no education. There would have been little or no use for machines of this kind in the old domestic industry, wherein the cottagers spun woollen yarn and the farmer wove cloth on a hand-loom when outdoor work was slack. The grouping of full-time workers into factories put a premium upon inventions that would save time and wages. The leading inventions were, first in 1733 Kay's flying shuttle, which increased the output of the hand-loom weaver and so increased his demand for yarn. After a time-lag the demand was met by improved spinning machines, such as Hargreaves's jenny (1764). In 1769 Arkwright devised a spinning machine to be run by water power and capable of hitherto incredible output. Crompton went still further with his mule machine in 1779, with which one operative could turn out as much yarn as two hundred of the old hand spinners. All this altered the former balance and gave scope for speeding up the weaving. Cartwright's power-loom responded in 1785, and became the foundation for many later improvements. These inventions were first developed in the cotton manufacture. Cotton spinning became a factory trade in the generation after 1760, and cotton weaving after 1790. Wool followed suit after an interval: from 1790 for spinning, from about 1820 for weaving. Each of the changes was spread over many years before completion, involving the out-classing and extinction in the direst poverty of a generation of the unwanted handicraftsmen. In the period 1790–1820, for example, the hand-loom weavers in the cotton trade were going under.

Power was applied to the machines in two phases, first, the water-

power period, and second, the steam-power. The water-power mills were located on the Lancashire and Yorkshire hillsides where the streams flowed vigorously and would turn large water-wheels to which the jennies and mules could be geared. While this was going on, James Watt was devising improved steam engines to give greater power for the fuel consumed. Just when Cartwright produced the power-loom, Watt's steam engine was ready to work it. From about 1790 the cotton industry went in for steam, and in so doing concentrated in the towns of the Lancashire plain where hands were more numerous, coal existed and communications were easier. Again, it was not a rapid change. By 1800 it was reckoned that there were not more than three hundred steam engines in use. The steam engine required accurate workmanship, and Watt was driven to desperation by the bungling of those who fitted and erected his engines. A whole new breed of men, the mechanical engineers, had to be gradually trained.

Quickened industry demanded better transport. In the first stage this meant the improvement of road transport. It is curious that, while mercantile policy made the fostering of shipping one of its chief aims for three centuries, it took no parallel interest in inland communications until the eighteenth century was well begun. That century witnessed the remaking of the roads by the system of turnpike trusts. The trust consisted of persons appointed as for a public duty. It raised money for the construction of the road and charged tolls for its use. Investment in the loans required by the trustees was one more of the many employments of fluid capital in fertilizing industry. The demand for better roads called forth a succession of talented engineers—Metcalf, Macadam, Telford and others—with new methods of construction. Two thousand turnpike Acts were passed during the century, and the improvement was enormous. Generally speaking, it took five days or more at its commencement to travel from London to any of the north of England towns; while at its close the journey could be done inside, or not much outside, twenty-four hours. Goods traffic was correspondingly accelerated. Speed was not the only gain. There was an all-round decrease in costs, and every part of the country was served by main-road traffic where previously many parts had been isolated. One result was that

famines due to local failure of crops were overcome, and another that coal could be much more widely distributed. The intangible effects of the new road traffic in spreading ideas and a spirit of enterprise and breaking down prejudiced stagnation were very important.

“Inland navigation” assisted in the transport of heavy stuff. Its first stage was the improvement of rivers and its second the new construction of canals. Increasing mobile capital provided the cost, and in one respect the waterways resembled the roads: their proprietors were not the owners of the vessels using them, but charged tolls to private owners. Not until a later stage did the canal companies operate their own barges.

There was a tendency to the same principle in the earliest railways, but it was soon abandoned as not feasible. Private individuals could not run their own trains on a common railway track. There is, however, a survival in the vast number of privately owned goods trucks in operation to this day. Rudimentary steam locomotives were tried from 1804, and short lengths of railed track for horse-drawn trucks had existed in the colliery districts long before that. The first railway of the modern type for both goods and passengers was the line from Manchester to Liverpool (nearly thirty miles) opened in 1830. Its success was assured by George Stephenson’s engines, which alone of the types tried were found to be reliable. Thenceforward the railways conquered the country in twenty years, the necessary preparation of the public mind for the surveying and acquisition of land having been made by the canal undertakings. By the opening of the railway age passenger transport on the roads was averaging ten miles an hour; for the stage-coaches, by frequently changing their teams, were able to move at a gallop over beautifully maintained surfaces. The early railways did not average much over twenty miles an hour, and more important than the increase of speed was the enormous increase in the volume of traffic. The stage-coach might carry ten passengers where the train carried two hundred. Fares were also reduced, until the Act of 1844 made it compulsory for every line to be traversed by at least one train a day charging no more than a penny a mile. The penny-a-mile was the third-class or “parliamentary” fare, maintained with increasing speed and comfort until it became one of the casualties of the war of 1914-18. It was abandoned then like penny

postage, and has never since been restored.

Bearing in mind that industry employed only one-third of the people at the beginning of the nineteenth century, we have the most immediately important part of the economic revolution still to consider. It was the transformation in the use of the land and the employment of the people who worked upon it. First it may be useful to recall some of the conditions of the food supply before the change took place. The older England grew a sufficiency of corn for its wants, and in the matter of breadstuffs was able to feed itself and generally to export a surplus. The rise of population began to extinguish the surplus after 1760 and to convert it into a deficit after 1790. In meat and dairy products the position had been less favourable owing to the lack of winter feeding-stuffs for the stock. From October to March the grass ceased to grow, and the cattle had to live on the hay and straw saved from the previous summer. It was insufficient to keep them in good condition. The consequence was that fresh meat was not available, since the animals were not fat enough to kill. For more than half the year the Englishman ate only salted meat, while his supply of milk, cheese and butter was greatly restricted. Salted cod from Iceland and Newfoundland and salted herrings from the North Sea were the common diet of the town poor in winter—which helps to explain the immoderate thirst of our ancestors.

In the restless eighteenth century enterprising men began to change these conditions. From Holland they derived the practice of planting clover and root crops hitherto grown only as garden vegetables. The root crop provided winter feed for the animals. It also aided corn-growing by taking the place of the fallow years of the old rotation and keeping the land in better condition. Other improvers increased the yield of corn by machine sowing instead of hand broadcasting, by using simple machines such as the horse-drawn hoe for some other processes, and by more scientific manuring. These things postponed the day when the land was no longer able to feed the growing population. The spread of ideas from the original practitioners would have been much slower but for the quickened social circulation produced by the transport revolution. Meanwhile the breeders of sheep and cattle had not been idle. Improved feeding and scientific selection

enabled them to make enormous advances. The size of carcases increased two or even threefold between the beginning and end of the eighteenth century. The improved milk supply undoubtedly helped the rise of population by preventing the deaths of innumerable children.

Such advances as the above were all to the good, but they were attained only at the cost of a social revolution whose effects were altogether bad. Over the richest agricultural lands of England, carrying more than half of her agricultural population, the feudal manor, itself a revised version of the Anglo-Saxon free township, had survived in the form it had been given by the abolition of villeinage. The cornland consisted of great open fields divided into many long and narrow strips (the strip shape being for convenience in various operations). A large number belonged to the lord of the manor, a second share generally to the parish parson as his glebe, and the remainder to the various freeholders of the community or to copy-holders who enjoyed perpetual tenure on payment of a small fixed rent to the lord of the manor. Each field had almost necessarily to grow one crop, no variation on the several strips being possible. The ploughing, sowing and harvesting were all done in common, although there was no pooling of the results. Each man received the output of his own particular share of the field. The meadow and pasture was similarly common. The hay was made and shared on traditional rules. The flocks and herds of the whole manor grazed together, each man entitled by traditional right to place so many animals on the common. In addition to the freehold cultivators there were numerous lower grades of property in the open-field village. Some who had no share in the arable land had rights of pasture. Lower still, there were many who were entitled to keep pigs or poultry on the waste or to cut wood or gather turf for fuel. These people made most of their living as day-labourers for the cultivators, yet they were all in their small way owners of something, with a place in the community. Their poor huts were their own, and they neither paid rent nor could be evicted.

Here was a society with a common purpose and with its members interlocked by well-ascertained duties and rights. In its rough way it was a harmony, lacking the envy and discontent that were to be

generated by a pure hours-and-wages system. Its defect was that it was growing more and more inefficient, in the light of advancing knowledge, for the purpose in view, the production of food. No cultivator could grow the new root crops or clover when the whole field was thrown open for the animals to graze on the stubble after the corn harvest. No breeder could make improvements when his animals ran in a common herd and were half starved on a generally overstocked pasture.

The remedy was enclosure, the breaking-up of the communal working, and the substitution of separate fenced-off properties in which each man could do as he saw fit. Some enclosure had already taken place in the early Tudor period, especially in the counties surrounding London, where the economic pull of a great market had caused increased production to take precedence of ancient social habits. In the south-west and west, the mixed Celtic-Saxon borderlands of earlier England, there was for climatic reasons comparatively little cultivation and much more pasture. The open-field village had never established itself, and the grazing lands, once tribally communal, had gradually become separate properties. It was in the great midland and East Anglian plain, with extensions south across the Thames and north across the Humber that open-field agriculture produced most of the country's corn in the early eighteenth century, and it was here, roughly from 1740 to 1840, that the whole system was changed to that of the enclosed properties familiar to-day.

The method was by private Acts of Parliament, some thousands of which were passed, a separate one for each operation. The Act appointed assessors to hear the various claims to property in the manor and to do justice to each in the form of an allotment of enclosable land. Generally speaking, the larger owners, able to produce documentary evidence and employ legal aid, got more than their just share, while the smaller men, illiterate and relying on customary and traditional rights, got less. Many got nothing at all, for lack of legal proof. Broadly speaking there were two phases observable in the whole movement. The earlier concerned mainly the arable land, breaking it up into enclosed properties, but leaving the grassland and waste untouched. Since the poorer people were those who had no share in the cornland, they were not much affected.

But later in the century the growing urban population made food prices rise, improved transport made markets more accessible, and scientific cultivation made it possible to raise paying crops on land previously classed as too poor for the purpose. This led to the second phase of enclosure, the parcelling-out of grass commons and wastes, and eviction of their traditional squatters. It was here that the social damage was done, and the many classes of petty property-owners converted into a single class of ill-paid wage labourers. Contemporary opinion of the sort expressed in Parliament and in print did not commonly regard it in that light. A usual argument was that the old lower-peasantry had led an irregular and undisciplined life, prone to idle and illegal habits, and that fixed work and wages under the direction of social superiors were good for their moral well-being. Many earnest savers of souls in the evangelical movement talked in this strain without any consciousness of hypocrisy. Yet there were others who saw deeper. Arthur Young, a man who preached enclosure as essential to the country's welfare, nevertheless admitted that it was being wickedly done. Nineteen out of twenty enclosure Acts, he said, had wronged the poor.

The industrial and agricultural changes were interlinked. The growth of industrial population was a motive for enclosure. The dispossessed peasantry moved to the towns and so strengthened that motive. Factory competition extinguished the cottage industries, and this implied a further loss to the peasant at the moment when he was being converted into an agricultural wage-labourer. In town and country alike the few became richer and the many poorer. Interaction was not merely internal. The economic transformation was conditioned by external trade, and especially by the long-distance oceanic trades, which rested on plantation colonies; the control of Indian provinces; and the possession of naval bases and commercial *entrepôts* on the tropical trade-routes. The old island economy was now part of something larger and more world-wide. The old island society was breaking down into something simpler but less pleasant to contemplate. The dominance of the machine was in its infancy, but the infant was destined to grow.

*3. India and the Far Eastern Interests*

For the future of the British people the growth of the Indian interest in the second half of the eighteenth century was probably more important than the great American conquests of the Seven Years War and the secession of the thirteen original colonies a few years later. Ever since that period Great Britain and India have reacted on one another, sometimes to evil effect, but much more commonly to their mutual benefit. There have been faults on both sides, and if there was greed on the part of the British in the early stages, there has been some ingratitude on the part of Indians in the later. But on the long view the co-operation has been far more noteworthy than the dissension. The effect of either partner upon the other has been to increase his wealth and well-being.

Until the middle of the eighteenth century the East India Company was purely a trading body, owning no Indian soil but the few square miles on which its three head factories stood. During that time its trade expanded at the rate characteristic of the preliminary, un-hurried half of the century; that is to say, its volume and value were doubled in forty years. Dupleix's war left it in control of the Carnatic, the province surrounding Madras, while the Seven Years War gave it the domination of Bengal, then regarded as the richest state in India. Clive's treaty with the Mogul Emperor in 1765 gave the Company the right to collect the revenues of Bengal and some adjacent country; and in practice financial control implied political.

The Company's trade had never been limited to India. In its early days it had tried to make the spice islands of the Asiatic archipelago its main scene of effort. The Dutch had proved too strong and had beaten it out of the islands, but some remnants of the intercourse persisted. Even when English ships were forbidden to go to the islands the Indian factories sent native vessels to exchange Indian wares for spices, which were forwarded from India to England. This practice led to the beginning of a yet more important trade with China, carried on at *entrepôt* ports in Siam, Tonquin and the islands. In theory China forbade European ships to enter her own ports, although in fact they sometimes did so. In the latter part of the seventeenth century the English visits became more common, and

the Company at length obtained a regularized right to trade at Canton under severe restrictions. From this there grew not only the traffic in Chinese silks and other textiles, lacquer ware and porcelain, all of which created new wants in England and ultimately stimulated English manufactures; but also the tea business, which grew gigantic before the eighteenth century came to its close.

The War of American Independence is inadequately named, for it was much more than that. While the old colonies were becoming the United States, a world-wide struggle was going on for West Indian plantations, African slaving posts, the control of oceanic routes, and the possession of India. The combatants were Great Britain, on the defensive, and the other oceanic powers, France, Spain and Holland, seeking to destroy her as a world power. The United States have since grown so great that we inevitably look upon them as the important subject of the war, and all else as merely side-shows. That is a false perspective. The retention of the continental colonies was a matter of prestige and sentiment, but not of much material value. Their liberation of themselves by force of arms was a sore blow to British pride and a source of vast satisfaction to England's enemies. But American independence abated not a whit the prosperity of Great Britain, nor checked for a moment her rapid commercial and industrial development. Because the ex-colonists became fully independent and did not pass under the domination of France or Spain, the trade of Great Britain with them continued and expanded with their growing population. This would not have been true of the tropical possessions, had the war gone against us in them. They would not have become independent but would have passed into anti-British ownership. The whole economic expansion of the country would have been checked in mid-career by the cutting-off of its operative cause, oceanic trade. Fortunately the Dutch and the Bourbon powers failed, and their assault left the economic British Empire battered but intact.

The British Navy, neglected by corrupt politicians, was overstrained in this war and had not much to spare for the East. Its Indian squadron did, however, prove just adequate to play its part in foiling a strong French effort to overthrow British India. The French were in association with some fighting Indian princes, but were too late

to co-operate with them. Hyder Ali of Mysore, the chief of them, invaded the Carnatic but was beaten back before the French were able to land. Had the two forces combined, Madras and the British hold on southern India would have gone, with perhaps Bengal to follow. The British forces were organized and financed by the statesmanship of Warren Hastings, governor-general at Calcutta. He was obliged to do some high-handed things for the public good, and was ungratefully treated in consequence. The end of the war in 1783 saw all British Indian interests retained, and a concession obtained from the Dutch for unimpeded British navigation through the Malay Straits and the archipelago. It reads as a tame victory; but the real victory was in the avoidance of a defeat which would have been catastrophic.

The East India Company's trade after the war became increasingly Chinese. Its factors at Canton shipped some seven thousand tons of tea in 1790 as compared with two thousand in 1762. At the same time much unofficially owned British and Asiatic shipping was obtaining China goods and exploiting the trade of the vast south-eastern archipelago in which the Dutch had long been the predominant power. The great ships of the Company sailed direct between England and China, but all the other traffic was based on India. British India was therefore an *entrepot* for the vast Far Eastern trade. It was also a place-of-arms, the base of troops and ships-of-war, for the defence of all these interests. Had India gone, all else would have gone. Meanwhile the British trade with India itself was increasing, but at a less rapid rate. The main British interest in India was becoming something quite other than commercial.

The Company's servants had always been farcically underpaid, receiving for a life spent in exile and a seventy-five per cent chance of death before thirty salaries no larger than could be earned by city clerks toiling safely in London. Why did they enter such a service? Why, in the later stages, did they clamour and intrigue for entry? Simply because the ostensible salaries were of no account as compared with the other opportunities of gain. From the beginning there was private trade. There was a vast inter-Asiatic trade with ramifications all over the Eastern seas, dealing in expensive luxury goods with enormous variations in prices between one place and another.

All over southern Asia society consisted of absolutisms, with an insecure wealthy class at the mercy of the ruler's caprice and based upon a servile population. The insecure rich were tempted to enjoy life while they had it and to squander on luxury without counting the cost. Everywhere there were prohibitions and restraints of trade or crippling tolls and dues; and everywhere such barriers could be surmounted by the bold and enterprising, with high financial reward. The Englishman in India had a chance of adventuring in this fascinating world. The only way for him to get to India was in the Company's service. No ships but the Company's sailed out round the Cape, and they carried no passengers but the King's troops and the Company's servants.

With the extension to the archipelago and China private trade found great opportunities. Money laid out in Indian cottons would buy more costly spices in the islands. From about 1790 Indian opium became a craze in China and the best means of purchasing tea. All the goods of the Far East could be sold at high profit in India, many of them to be brought ultimately to Europe in the guise of the Company's own cargoes. In effect the Company's servants were doing part of its business for their own private profit.

The territorial conquests opened up still greater sources of gain. When after Plassey the merchants at Calcutta found themselves in broad control of a province with twice the population of England they must have been astonished, for they had hitherto considered themselves as hanging on precariously at the whim of a mighty native power. Now, with a puppet prince whom they could unmake if they willed they had the power of political, military and financial decisions in their hands; and they had this in a country in which from time immemorial everything had been done by bribery and nothing without it. Suitors came pressing money upon them with both hands. As in all these countries there were in Bengal two systems of administration and expenditure, the one official, the other unofficial and more effective. The Calcutta English found themselves part of the latter and accepted the position. The vast sums they made did not lie idle. They were invested in the Far Eastern trade and fertilized it to enormous increase, until ultimately the whole fortune went home as a bill on London to be cashed on arrival.

This post-Plassey time was the era of the nabobs, the name given in England to the wealthy retired from the East. Their wealth played an appreciable part in financing the industrial revolution. It made them also a power in politics. As a class they were unpopular. Socially they were disliked as upstarts and intruders by the older rich, while their outlandish habits and dark-skinned servants made humbler folk regard them as foreigners from another world. Before very long their methods of enrichment began to be investigated, and the ruling class of the eighteenth century experienced a new sensation, that of moral indignation at the conduct of some of its own members, and shame at their degradation of the good name of England. The first investigation, in 1772-3, cost Clive his peace of mind and drove him to suicide. It issued in the Regulating Act for subjecting the Company to some measure of government control.

Warren Hastings was then appointed to govern Bengal and supervise the other presidencies with the title of Governor-General. He made considerable reforms in administration and curbed the most flagrant abuses of the earlier time. In great political difficulties with the native powers he committed acts which were denounced as tyrannical and led to his subsequent impeachment; but the fact is that without much help from home he saved the British position in India in the critical later years of the War of Independence. Hastings had not been allowed to do all that he wished, and admitted that corruption continued. Men still contrived to grow fantastically rich in India, but not by the crude methods of the 1760's. The Company as a territorial power was now almost incessantly at war with one Indian state or another, for war was the normal condition among the Indian states of the period. The Company had therefore to keep armies in the field, and their transport and supply in a country of vast distances and obstacles was an expensive matter. Just as its servants had engaged in private trade to supply its ships with cargoes, so now they acted as contractors to its forces and made huge profit from the supply of victuals and labour.

The Regulating Act had not done much regulating of Indian abuses. Warren Hastings went home in 1785 to be unjustly blackened and accused—for his services to his country's interests had been great, while Lord Cornwallis went out as governor-general under a new

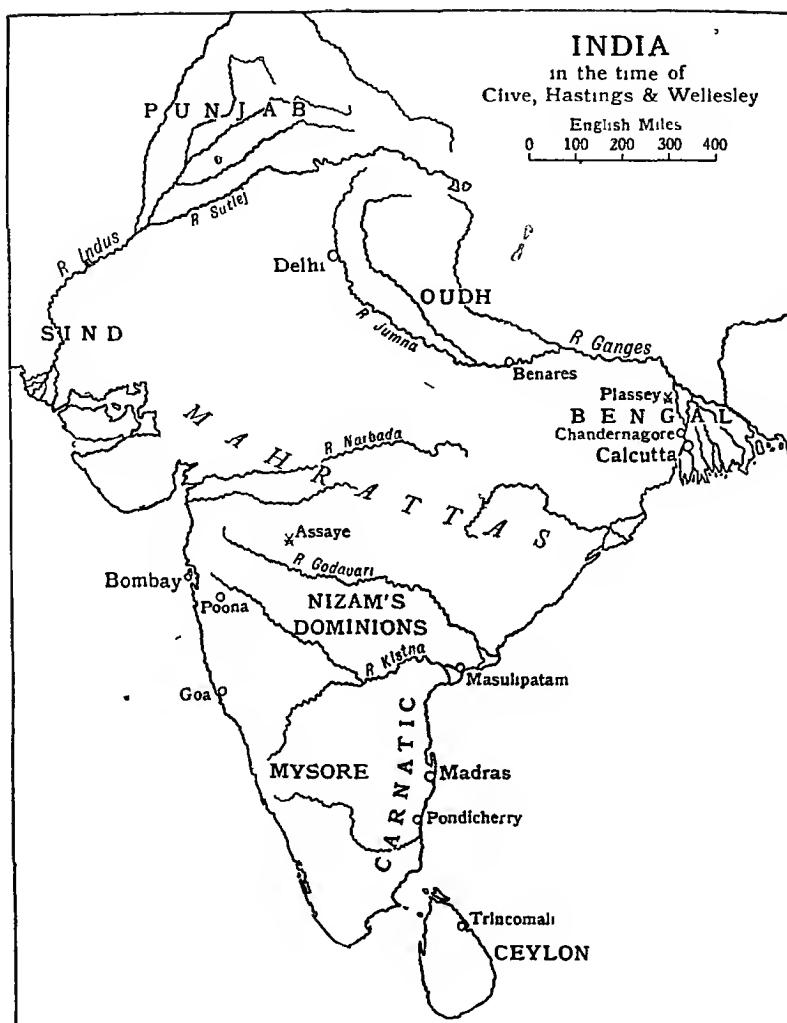
India Act passed by Pitt in 1784. It was a more workable measure and remained in force until 1858, and indeed formed the basis of the British system thereafter. For the first time the Company agreed to pay its servants adequately to the risks and duties required of them, and Cornwallis made a beginning of converting a somewhat discreditable set of adventurers into a public service whose ideals and traditions were destined to become the loftiest in the world.

The wars with the French Revolution and Napoleon had great effects in the East. Napoleon was well aware of the necessity of the eastern trade to the British economic system. While still a general under the Directory he undertook the Egyptian expedition of 1798 for the conquest of Egypt and Syria and an advance through the Middle East, coupled probably with a sea invasion of India from the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf. Nelson and the Navy killed that scheme. But its mere distant initiation caused great disturbance in India, where the militant native powers were ready to welcome the French as a temporary aid wherewith to beat the British. The British government sent out the Marquis Wellesley, a man of the first ability, as governor-general. India was already full of French officers who had taken service with the native powers in an advance infiltration against British interests. Wellesley challenged the princes: "Either dismiss your Frenchmen, or fight". Some complied, others fought. In battles compared with which Plassey had been a skirmish the British forces overcame Mysore, the militant state of the south, and the Maratha warrior-princes of central India. Wellesley annexed large territories and disarmed the remainder, requiring the princes to accept defence by the Company, and to pay for it. The arrangement was called a subsidiary treaty.

Wellesley's rule, from 1798 to 1805, marks the transformation of British India. His annexations and subsidiary treaties made the Company the largest and strongest territorial power, and the princes of the centre and south its vassals. Only in the north-west did there remain independent military powers. Henceforward the main business of the Company was the government of its vast territories, and its trade in India filled a minor position in its activities. Its best men were now administrators, and they were of a different type from the greedy adventurers of the past. The transformation begun by

INDIA  
in the time of  
Clive, Hastings & Wellesley

English Miles  
0 100 200 300 400



Cornwallis was continued by Wellesley. The service was now able to attract men of position and substance who valued reputation above material gain. An era of splendid, generous and high-minded British leadership in India began, and its example spread downwards through all ranks. Wellesley himself advised annexations because he believed that they were for the benefit of the peoples concerned. For a century India had been divided and misruled by military adventurers. The British administrators of the new type could offer something better—freedom from official robbery, from military devastation, from perversion of justice, from violent caprice. For the first time the common man could learn the possibilities of decent government.

Trade was not an activity in which such men as the above were chiefly interested. Wellesley advised the ending of the monopoly. The private trading interest of the Company's servants had been ended by better pay and discipline, and the great inter-Asiatic traffic with which they had been concerned was now operated by detached British firms resident in India. They lacked only the privilege of shipping their goods home round the Cape. At the other end the merchants of London, Liverpool and Glasgow claimed to be allowed to export to India in their own ships. All pressures converged until in 1813 the India trade was thrown open. The Company retained its China monopoly for another twenty years.

#### *4. Politics, Society and the Last French War*

In a sense the French Revolution was an expected event, in a sense unexpected. For a century the French monarchy had been declining in prestige and power, its absolutism having become a rickety machine that continued to revolve feebly because no one had yet shown the initiative to stop it. Plenty of observers, French and foreign, had pointed out the feebleness and the likelihood of a breakdown; and the *philosophes*, the intellectuals of the period, continually criticized the state and its co-partner the Church, and aired theories of popular sovereignty and parliamentary control. When the breakdown began in 1789 with bankruptcy and the summoning of the States General, all seemed to be in order, and a constitutional monarchy on the British model was expected to follow. Something

to the British, Pitt sent large naval and military forces to the Caribbean. He made some conquests at the cost of a huge number of casualties from sickness and has been much criticized for so wasting the flower of the British Army. It should be remembered that the West Indian plantations were a greater interest than they now are. Their loss would have involved that of a large section of British trade and home employment, and public opinion would not have supported any government that had tamely allowed them to be submerged in a servile revolt. That is not to say that the Caribbean campaigns were well conducted, for they certainly were not. The Army was in one of its periods of low performance.

With the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte the interest shifted to the East. His Egyptian expedition of 1798 was intended to lay the foundation of a French hold on southern Asia and the Indian Ocean. Could it have succeeded, it would have been a fairly certain means of British ruin, for by that date the country could not have carried on without the Asiatic trade. But Napoleon did what continental soldiers have even now not learnt that they must not do: he took an army across the sea without first securing the command of the sea. He landed the army and occupied Egypt. Nelson with a British fleet then came up and destroyed the French fleet in the Battle of the Nile, and so severed the army from France. Napoleon, after a march into Syria, had to admit failure. He made his personal escape to France, leaving his army to surrender. The effects of his expected coming upon the militant powers of India, and Wellesley's rout of those powers, have already been described.

After the short-lived Peace of Amiens the war recommenced in 1803 as the Napoleonic War. The interest of its first years was Napoleon's undertaking to invade England. His successive plans were all based on the evasion and not the overthrow of the superior British sea power. The last of them, the plan of 1805, brought the West Indian interest into a combination that was more ingenious than sound. Three French squadrons, separately blockaded, were to escape from their several ports and make for the West Indies. There they were to attack the British plantations. The British government would be forced by commercial pressure and its own sense of the values at stake to send the main naval forces to the rescue. The

French squadrons would then combine into a great fleet and return to Europe, timing their disappearance from the Caribbean so as to avoid action with the pursuing British. Arriving in superior force in the Channel, they would cover the crossing of Napoleon's army, and the war would be won. In part the plan worked, and wholly it failed. A French fleet, with Spanish auxiliaries, did reach the West Indies, but it was so panicky about Nelson's pursuit that it darted away without committing the expected depredations. Nelson's fleet was from the Mediterranean. The British Channel and Biscay squadrons were not employed in the pursuit. They concentrated in the mouth of the Channel, and when the French from the west drew near it was to find these forces barring their way, while Nelson was coming on behind. Villeneuve, the French admiral, saw that the scheme was hopeless and turned south to take refuge in Cadiz. Napoleon gave up the invasion and marched east to strike at Russia and Austria. Two months later he staked and lost his fleet at Trafalgar, but that battle did not decide the fate of the invasion as is so commonly supposed.

At the opening of the war Napoleon effected a bargain with the United States of immense importance to the future of the world. In 1803 he sold to the American republic Louisiana, which Spain had ceded to France three years earlier. Louisiana was a huge wedge of unoccupied territory widening indefinitely north-westwards from the inhabited point of New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi. It had been acquired by Napoleon with a view to re-creating the colonial empire of France. British sea power in the new war convinced him that this would be impracticable, and he therefore sold out. For the United States the Louisiana Purchase provided not only a port on the Gulf of Mexico, but the ownership of the farther bank of the Mississippi and the exploitation of the Far Western country beyond it. Before the acquisition the United States covered only the area from the Atlantic to the east bank of the Mississippi.

After the defeat of the invasion plan and the crushing disaster of Trafalgar, which precluded any hope of its renewal, Napoleon sought to strike down England by the use of an economic weapon. He tried to create the conditions of a blockade by forbidding his continental vassals to trade with the British, or to admit British

ships to their ports. In reply the British government issued orders in council establishing a real blockade (real because the Navy could enforce it) of all ports which would not admit British trade. Napoleon correctly called his plan the continental system, for it needed to embrace the whole continent to be effective. It never did so in practice, for the vassal states were so unwilling to apply it that they permitted wholesale smuggling in face of the nominal prohibition. Portugal, a traditional ally of Great Britain, refused to sever relations with her. This led Napoleon to seize first Portugal and then Spain by military force, and so there began the Peninsular War in which his two victims were delivered by their own efforts and British aid. The attempt to enforce the continental system led also to deep disaffection against Napoleon in central Europe, previously not embittered against him; and to the quarrel with Russia in 1812 that proved to be the beginning of his end.

It would be false to say, however, that the continental system, even if it ruined its author, did no harm to his enemy. It achieved a partial stoppage of British trade with Europe, and cut off a considerable proportion of the market for British woollen manufactures and part of that for cottons and iron. It thus caused great distress among the industrial population and discontent among both masters and men. Further, it hindered the import of corn from central Europe and the Baltic, then the chief source of foreign supply, at a time when the growth of population rendered importation necessary to well-being. The resulting high prices during the middle part of the war caused terrible distress. England was saved by her oceanic trades which Napoleon could not touch, and particularly by those with Asia, in which she established a virtual monopoly. During the Napoleonic War, for example, India, which had hitherto woven her own cottons and exported some to England, became an importer of Lancashire cotton goods owing to the extent to which machine manufacture had reduced prices.

As between Great Britain and France, the real war was naval and economic, and the Asiatic communications were the object of some important movements. The Egyptian campaign and the Battle of the Nile have already been mentioned. They revealed a new importance in the command of the Mediterranean, which had hitherto

been chiefly valuable for its influence on military campaigns in Europe. On his way to Egypt, Napoleon seized Malta, and in 1800 the Maltese with British aid overcame the French garrison and passed under British rule. The Maltese are a distinct and separate nation, but with their small numbers could not hope to stand alone among the great naval powers. They had to accept membership of one empire or the other, and they showed emphatically that they preferred the British. On the all-sea route to the East the Dutch possession of Capetown formed a good base for commerce-raiding cruisers, while in Ceylon, also Dutch, the fortified harbour of Trincomalee could give refuge and sustenance to squadrons operating on the east coast of India. Between the Cape and India the French possessed two more cruiser bases in Mauritius and the Isle of Bourbon (now Réunion), both in the western Indian Ocean. The Dutch in Europe were overrun and became a French satellite republic early in the revolutionary wars. France was thus able to use the Dutch fleets and colonies, and did so for the purpose of inflicting loss on British commerce. There was only one answer. In 1795 British expeditions captured the Cape and Ceylon. The Cape was given back at the Peace of Amiens and recaptured (finally) in 1806. Ceylon was not restored. Trafalgar ended Napoleon's power to send out battle-fleets and plan invasions; but in the vast oceans, as we still know to-day, commerce destroyers can operate against a general command of the sea. The Indian trade was thus subject to losses so long as the French held Mauritius and Bourbon, and both were captured by the British in 1810. In the farthest East there were also changes. The China traffic, by this time an interest of the first importance, had to pass through the archipelago, whose strategic harbours were in Dutch-French possession. The British therefore attacked and captured in succession Malacca, on the straits of that name; the Moluccas, the original spice islands; and finally, in 1811, the great island headquarters of Java, whose capital, Batavia, was the seat of power in the Far East. All these operations east of the Cape of Good Hope were performed by expeditions setting out from India, a good illustration of the importance of India as a place-of-arms for British power all over the East.

In the other rich area of tropical trade, the West Indies and the

adjacent coasts of South America, the Dutch lost their plantations in Guiana, where a large number of the planters were actually Englishmen. Spain, in alliance with France during part of these wars, similarly lost the large island of Trinidad, where again many of the planters were British. France was unable to prevent the capture of her smaller West Indian islands or to reconquer the largest, Hayti, from its rebellious slaves.

The events above outlined, of the utmost importance to the twin interests of British industry and the British Empire, were not merely the background of the Napoleonic War. They were the Napoleonic War. They gave the country a secure position, subject to great discomfort from the partial breach of intercourse with Europe, but unassailable by the master of that continent. In some respects, such as the control of the tropical trades, the longer the war lasted the stronger the British position grew.

Meanwhile the peoples of the continent themselves began to deal with the Napoleonic dictatorship. First rose Portugal and Spain, then Russia, then the Germans in a passion for liberty so soon to be curbed by the Prussian militarists and subdued to their service after it had overthrown their conqueror. The British army under Wellington fought in the Peninsula. The Spanish resistance was nation-wide but not organized on any regular fronts. Spain in fact gave the world a new military term, guerilla warfare. Merely to hold down the large cities and keep open the main roads occupied far larger French forces than their enemies at any time had in the field. Every time the French pressure looked like subduing resistance, Wellington with his little army of regulars struck in from Portugal. The French had to concentrate against him, and their anti-Spanish work was all undone. Wellington would then inflict a smart defeat on the advancing French—as at Talavera, Busaco, Salamanca—and retire before the gathering concentration to his secure sea-nourished base in Portugal. This combination of guerilla and regular wore down the French and lost Napoleon the soldiers who might have saved him in central Europe. At length in 1813 came the final advance out of Portugal, and the battle of Vittoria far up towards the Pyrenees. This time no British retreat followed, but a rout of the French that cleared them out of Spain by the end of the year.

Napoleon, having lost a great army in Russia in 1812, was likewise routed at Leipsic in 1813, and driven out of Germany as his marshals were driven out of Spain. The war ended in France in the spring of 1814. It flared up again for the Hundred Days of Napoleon's return in 1815, but was ended for good at Waterloo, where Wellington showed the world that he was personally a more active general, a better tactician, and a more inspiring leader in battle than the man who had bullied Europe for twenty years. To those who have soaked their minds in the post-fabricated Napoleonic legend it may seem blasphemy to say it, but the cold fact is that Wellington knew his job better than Napoleon did.

The settlement of continental affairs was made at the Vienna Conference in 1815. That of colonial and oceanic questions was effected at Paris in 1814, and only slightly modified in the following year. Great Britain retained Malta, the Cape, Mauritius, Ceylon and ultimately Malacca; and gave back Réunion and Java. The restitution of Java was a large-minded act, for the colony was the richest in the East. But in Europe the combined Kingdom of the Netherlands (Holland and Belgium) was being set up as a buffer against future aggression, and Great Britain contributed to its strengthening by handing over its greatest colony. In the West she kept part of Guiana and restored the remainder. She also gave back to France the rich plantations of Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana, and kept the minor islands of Tobago and St. Lucia, both of which had once been British and had been lost in previous wars. On the whole the great settlement strengthened the British hold on the tropical trade routes, but did not manifest any grasping or ungenerous insistence on the extreme limits to which sea power had carried British enterprise.

The twenty-two years' war from 1793 to 1815, with a fifteen-months interval in 1802-3, was the first which Great Britain had fought as a partly industrialized nation. The change gave her enormous wealth, increased sea power, and marked general resilience and staying power. It also ensured that the hardships resulting from war should be much more punishing to some sections of the people than in the past. Closure of particular markets and stoppage of particular trades entailed mass unemployment among those who had been

manufacturing for them. There were then no unemployment allowances nor any form of relief but that of the poor law, rationing food in time of scarcity was unthought of, and so also was the levelling-down of high prices by government subsidy. The result was that while the country as a whole was growing richer the wealth was ill distributed, and multitudes were poorer than ever, poor to starvation point. This was the effect of the industrial and agricultural revolutions intensified by the war.

In consequence the working class began for the first time to take an interest in politics as something which might be of material concern to themselves, and not merely the sporting entertainment of the past which they had viewed as spectators. The Radical movement was born. In its first phase, under the inspiration of Thomas Paine, it was closely connected with the French proceedings of 1789-1792. Paine entitled his manifesto *The Rights of Man*, and Fox's supporters founded a revolutionary club called the Friends of the People, both of which titles were borrowed from the French. These early Radical leaders resembled the revolutionary sympathizers in the Netherlands and Italy. They hoped to achieve their aims with French aid, and some of them would have co-operated with a French conquest of their country. Pitt has in the past been reproached with panic and severity in putting them down. The events of 1790 showed us that he was probably right to do so. Most of these men were not consciously traitors, but they were a danger nevertheless. Pitt did not execute one of them, in spite of what their friends were doing in France. Imprisonment and transportation were the British penalties for seditious propaganda.

Radicalism spread among the new industrial town population. It formed the complement to their discontent and sufferings. Its most important manifestation at first was not a demand for parliamentary reform, which in the 1790's would have been crying for the moon, but the formation of trade unions to extort better conditions from employers. So alarming did authority find this movement that Parliament passed the Combination Acts in 1799-1800, making the unions for practical purposes illegal.

Out of this suppression and the growing distress from dear food and unemployment engendered by the Continental System sprang

a new and more aggressive Radicalism. Its mood was defiant. It formed illicit trade unions and broke the machinery of unpopular masters. It was not prepared to ask vainly for parliamentary reform, but to take it by violent insurrection. It was a British movement without continental affinities, dealing little in political philosophy and inspired by the need to improve material conditions.

The defeat of Napoleon in Germany in 1813 opened the German and Baltic ports and sent over cargoes of corn to hungry England. In 1814-15 the price of bread fell considerably, and the farmers who were ploughing poorly yielding land had to sell their crops at a loss. Thousands went bankrupt, and their landlords in turn had to accept lower rents. The landed interest, which thought of itself as the backbone of England, was imperilled by the peace as the manufacturing interest had been hit by the war. But the land controlled Parliament, and its answer was simple. In 1815 it passed the Corn Law forbidding any importation of corn until the home price of wheat should reach 80s. per quarter, a figure which meant hunger for the poor.

### *5. Political and Social Reform*

It has been said that in 1815 the British people found themselves facing novel conditions for which their past history gave no guidance and their existing institutions were unsuited; and that the nineteenth century shows them painfully learning a new way of life and creating a new social mechanism. That is an economic interpretation of history not altogether adequate, for in human communities there is a spirit as well as a mechanism; but it will serve as a synopsis of much of this chapter.

The close of the Napoleonic War found the industrial population in a fairly desperate state. Government expenditure on munitions, although nothing like so great as in later contests, had been appreciable. It ceased abruptly and so caused immediate unemployment. The dismissal of many thousands of soldiers and sailors, men of long service with no jobs awaiting them and without any provision for their maintenance, added to the roll of the homeless and destitute. There was no revival of foreign trade. The European market needed years to recover; and recovery was hindered by the Corn Law, which

prevented north-central Europe from paying with its produce for the British goods it would have imported. Large sections of the townspeople thus had no work and no money coming in. For bare bread sufficient to avert death by hunger they could look to the Poor Law. For anything that made the prospect of life tolerable they had no hope until the times should mend. Some had no hope at all, the out-classed craftsmen whose living had been taken by the machines. Cotton weavers in 1815 were down and out, and could expect no further gain from their craft. The cotton mills employed men, it is true, but not in proportion to the far more numerous women and child workers. The hand-loom weaver sent his wife and children to the mill while he stood idle about the streets of the industrial town into which, perhaps, he had migrated as a young countryman evicted by enclosure years before.

The industrial town is the most vivid illustration of what the industrial revolution meant to the working people involved in it. It consisted of the mills and factories surrounded by street after street of tiny brick dwellings, dovetailed into one another like matchboxes, and very thick on the ground to the exclusion of garden space or any other amenities. These streets were run up by the mile, often on swampy soil and without any proper foundations; yet a large proportion of their inhabitants lived in cellars below the ground level. There was no sewerage or provision for the disposal of human excrement, which pervaded the surroundings in an ever-present foulness. There was no piped supply of water, which came from wells sunk amid the sewage. The narrow streets between the terraces were unpaved, unlighted and uncleansed, mere wallows in which heaps of decaying refuse accumulated. There were no schools, parks, playgrounds or recreations, save drink for those who had the wherewithal. Overhead and down upon everything drifted the perpetual smoke-cloud from the big chimneys. Out of every den poured the vapours of corruption and infection, to inflame every throat as the sicker poisons found passage into every stomach. Fevers due to contamination were the commonest cause of death. There was always fever in the slum streets. The industrial change enriched the nation, made the fortunes of many individuals, and improved the amenities of life for large classes who did not live in the industrial areas, and

even for a select few of the foremen, overseers, skilled mechanics and such-like who did. For the rank and file it was a horror. The expectation of life in Manchester and Liverpool, that is, the average age at death, was only half as many years as in the rural areas. The child born in a Liverpool slum might be expected to die at fifteen; the child of a Wiltshire farm labourer, to live to thirty-three. And even he at times found conditions so intolerable that he would risk hanging to alleviate them. About the life of the towns Mr G. M. Young has written in *Victorian England*: "The imagination can hardly apprehend the horror in which thousands of families a hundred years ago were born, dragged out their ghastly lives, and died."

There was no possibility that the victims of these conditions would themselves reform them. Where there is overcrowding the standards of the lowest prevail and pull down the others to their level. These new populations were immigrants from the countryside, where lack of sanitation did not mean the befouling of all things. They had no tradition for the self-regulation of crowded societies. They speedily fell so low in degradation that they had no chance of forming one. That they were degraded there is no doubt. In the mass they were drunken, violent, vicious and callous to the last degree. Yet there were always exceptions, untaught men who somehow educated themselves, men with some public spirit who organized trade unions, believers in the Christian gospel who tried to make their lives an example. What these of the better sort must have endured passes imagination.

In the country the enclosures were almost complete. The resulting villagers were not "the free-born Englishmen" of a hundred years before. The large farmer was there, a man of greater wealth and social position than in time past, but below him all the lesser grades of property-owners had gone. They had merged into the one class of the agricultural labourer. It was by far the most numerous class in England, comprising more than half the population. The agricultural life was healthy compared with that of the towns, that is to say, the children survived in higher numbers and produced an over-population whose surplus migrated into the slums and died there. But for all that it was terribly hard. The factories had killed the ancient cottage industries, the countryman had no longer a common on

which to feed a cow, or the right to cut wood from waste land in community ownership, or even a garden patch attached to his cottage. He was dependent solely on his wages supplemented by a dole. The wages were fixed by the county magistrates in quarter sessions, and were supposed to bear relation to the price of bread. But in 1795, with prices *rising* owing to the war, the Berkshire justices decided not to raise wages but to give the employed man a bread allowance from the poor rate in proportion to the size of his family. The plan became known as the Speenhamland system and was quickly copied in other counties. The hope was that the war would soon end and prices fall, when it would be easier to cut off the dole than to reduce wages that had once been established. But the wars went on, and prices never did fall. By 1815 they grew higher than ever, for the Corn Law gave no cheaper loaf to the producers of bread than to any others. Thus almost every rural labourer was in receipt of poor relief and to that extent a pauper. His living was so fixed as just to keep him alive and no more. He was socially unfree, like a mediaeval serf, for his dole depended to some extent on the report of his employer. He was under perpetual temptation, almost obligation, to poaching for the satisfaction of his hunger; and for poaching he was liable to transportation beyond the seas, never to return. Hunger, exposure and tyranny were the lot of the nineteenth-century rustic, who would have smiled derisively at anyone describing him as a free-born Englishman. The great commercial-industrial expansion had done no good to him, who was worse off than his grandfather had been. What wonder that he was idle and drunken and criminally inclined, that he snared other men's rabbits and even set fire to their ricks. Rabbits and ricks may once have been his, but were no longer.

The field of reform was nation-wide, and there was no lack of reformers. They were of many types and all classes, although mainly from the middle and upper ranks of society. Their interests, temperaments and methods show wide differences, but there is a factor common to all of them—reliance upon Parliament. A powerful section thought that the reform of Parliament must come first, after which it would be a fit instrument to reform all else. Others would use Parliament as it stood, not so efficient, but more immediately available. Others took the reformed Parliament as they found

it after 1832, and passed their projects rapidly through it. But, for all, Parliament was the means of expressing the English will, and no one had any thought of abolishing it in favour of some other political device.

In the immediate post-1815 years the would-be reformers of Parliament were most prominent, a group of aggressive Radicals: Henry Hunt, unsuccessful farmer and Radical orator, who showed the possibilities of the mass meeting as an inspirer and a channel of opinion; William Cobbett, farmer's son and ex-sergeant of the regular army, a conservative who looked back to the free peasantry of pre-enclosure days and hated the great landlords and the new gentleman-farmers and their enclosing Parliament which had abolished his ideal, who wrote fierce, terse English in his weekly *Political Register* and inspired many a down-trodden wretch to think; Francis Place the Londoner, master tailor, student of history, Radical election manager in the exceptional democratic constituency of Westminster, a sincere friend of the working masses, but one without any high estimate of their political wisdom or capacity. These men led militant radicalism, concentrated its energy upon the one object, and convinced authority that revolution was seriously threatened. They were not, however, brothers-in-arms. Place, Hunt and Cobbett despised and detested one another, and spoke in terms of mutual abuse as extreme as those which they applied to the common enemy.

Jeremy Bentham was the head of the Radical thinkers, the priest of the sect of the Utilitarians, who criticized institutions from the standpoint of their utility in securing "the greatest good of the greatest number". His writings were directed less to stirring up the oppressed than to convincing and guiding those in power, and reforms which he advocated continued to be pursued long after his death.

Robert Owen was an example of the poor boy risen to command in industry. Many such became hard masters with no sympathy for the class from which they had sprung. Owen was an idealist, and yet must have been an able man of business. At his New Lanark mills he proved that industry could yield a decent life to the operatives and a profit to the capitalist. Everything was "model", the

housing, the factory, the schooling, the recreations, an industrial heaven compared with Leeds or Manchester. Yet the experiment withered in its success. Fellow manufacturers saw and praised but did not imitate. Workers, it may be gathered, were lukewarm towards an eternal feast of supervised virtue. Owen turned his interests elsewhere, towards communist settlements in America and a universal trade union in England.

In the ruling class there were reformers in both camps, Brougham, Durham and Russell among the Whigs, Peel and Huskisson among the Tories. Henry Brougham believed in education and did much for it, until at length it was adopted as a responsibility of the state. The Earl of Durham brought more power than any other man to the cause of Parliamentary reform. He was not a whimsy nobleman turned Radical to shock his friends, nor did he talk the language of the *sansculottes*. He faced the fact that a revolution had occurred and that English institutions must be remodelled to suit the new conditions. He had no illusion that the mob degraded by the mills and the slums was fit for power, but he thought that Parliament should be based on the votes of all who evinced character and intelligence. He was completely public-spirited and regardless of any results of reform to his own wealthy order. With him stood Lord John Russell, an able political leader and a sincere reformer in his younger and better days. Sir Robert Peel, son of a great mill-owner, grandson of a yeoman farmer who had migrated into industry, was the best type of Tory, devoted to the interest of the country before that of any section of it. A deep feeling for justice actuated him and brought him more than once into collision with his party. In the 1820's his work was to reform the criminal law by mitigating harsh punishments, and to organize the police force in order to prevent crime. William Huskisson was a practical economist, in the line of descent from Pitt. He saw that the Corn Law was too rigid and altered it. He saw also that trade was more likely to die of strangulation than of liberty, and went far to modify the worst restrictions that retarded the return of prosperity.

As has been shown, the public health needed a saviour, and it found him at length in Edwin Chadwick, the typical administrative reformer of the new age. Devoted to reports and statistics, with

few human sympathies, disliked by some who worked with him, Chadwick regarded his country and his countrymen as something dirty to be made clean. His first task was the reform of the Poor Law, and later he came to the delight of his life with the formation of the Board of Health.

Wilberforce and Shaftesbury represented reform conceived in terms of Christian duty. William Wilberforce, an ageing man as the post-war age set in, had already stopped the slave trade and was still to play his part in freeing all existing slaves under the British flag. His ardent religion disabled him as a reformer at home; he felt no incentive to combat poverty since he believed that a poor man was more likely to reach heaven than a rich one. The Earl of Shaftesbury, a Tory in politics, with no faith in the wide extension of political power, nevertheless held that power must be exercised to Christian ends by those to whom it was entrusted. His religious practice was of the strictest and bleakest, yet he had a mighty sympathy for the oppressed, and particularly for the physically ill-used. His life was devoted to the Factory Acts, first for improving the lot of the children and the women, and later that of the men. The children were always first in his plans, and nineteenth-century childhood owed him much.

Such were some of the men who were to shape the new age. There was no uniformity in their characters and methods. Some drew their inspiration from *The Rights of Man* and French democracy, others from John Wesley and evangelicalism. Between the two wings there was little cordiality, but each could do what the other could not. Together they made British reformation an evolution, not a breach with the past. Therein they differed from the single-type French doctrinaires of 1789 or the terrible logicians of Moscow in 1917.

For seven years after Waterloo revolution threatened. The state of the country was alarming, with desperate poverty, seditious meetings and marches, defiant talk and serious rioting on the one hand; and on the other, blind repression and hardness, without any constructive policy to lift the community out of the mess. The reactionary wing of the Tories were in power in the Liverpool ministry. Their policy was dictated by what had happened in France. Louis XVI had

half-heartedly favoured reform, and had thereby lost his own head and ruined the French ruling class. There should be no such folly on this side. So thought Eldon, the Lord Chancellor, Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, and Castlereagh, the Foreign Secretary. To detect Radical plans they employed spies and informers, who often reported more than they detected. They suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, the guarantee of liberty whereby a man could claim to be brought to trial within a reasonable time of being arrested. Under their inspiration the Manchester magistrates used cavalry charges to break up a reform meeting in 1819, and caused many deaths and serious injuries. Then followed the Six Acts of the same year for the purpose not only of disarming the Radicals but of suppressing their opinions. Lord Castlereagh, as an Irish peer, sat in the Commons and was the government's spokesman there. On him all popular hatred was concentrated. In 1822 his mind gave way and he killed himself. The London crowd cheered as his funeral passed through the streets.

At the same time Sidmouth and other reactionaries resigned and the ministry, still under Lord Liverpool, was reconstructed. The reforming Tories came in, George Canning at the Foreign Office, Peel as Home Secretary, Huskisson at the Board of Trade, Frederick Robinson ("Prosperity Robinson") as Chancellor of the Exchequer. These changes made 1822 the turning-point at which the country took the upward path and ceased to drift to disaster.

Canning exercised the Commons leadership with a sympathy contrasting with Castlereagh's austerity. Peel repudiated the spy system and reformed the criminal law, reducing the innumerable capital offences to four and improving the prisons and the transportation system. He also created the Metropolitan Police and taught them to restrain popular violence without bloodshed. It has been remarked that if in 1819 there had been a police force in Manchester there would have been no massacre. Huskisson and Robinson reduced excessive customs duties, repealed out-of-date restrictions in the Navigation Acts, and negotiated treaties for mutual trade concessions with foreign countries. They also reduced the price limit below which corn could not be imported to 7s. Later, Huskisson procured an entire change of principle in the Corn Law by his sliding scale of 1828. Importation was no longer prohibited at any stage, but was subject

to high duties when corn was cheap and low ones when it was dear. This was less harsh than the prohibition of 1815. Another reform helped to sweeten Radical tempers, the legalization of trade unions in 1824-5. The Tory reformers carried it, on the advice and urging of Francis Place. The unions by no means obtained the full powers they now enjoy, but their right to exist was recognized and their upward struggle could be openly carried on.

These measures and this change of atmosphere made the mid-1820's a brighter time, in which trade and employment began to improve. But there were set-backs to come, and the greatest reforms were yet to be tackled. Liverpool fell sick and Canning died, and the long Tory ascendancy ended with the two years' ministry of Wellington and Peel in 1828-30. Its chief work was to carry Catholic Emancipation, the repeal of the old restrictive laws on the state employment of Catholics and other non-members of the Church of England, and the admission of Catholics to seats in Parliament. The reform was opposed by a bigoted section who cried out upon Peel as a traitor and ceased to support the ministry. It was the Whigs' opportunity, and they seized it.

In 1830 Wellington resigned and the Whigs came in. For long they had hesitated on parliamentary reform. Now, under the pressure of Durham and Russell, who did much to commit them, they pledged themselves to it. Lord Grey, in his youth a follower of Fox, formed a ministry, every member of which was a peer or a lord by courtesy, and these aristocrats set themselves to make Parliament representative of the people. The Tories were against any change, and their majority in the Lords threw out the Reform Bill, only to be obliged to yield when Grey returned to the attack with the public will vigorously expressed on his side. The country was excited and determined, and there were tense moments and revolutionary talk. But the actual danger of an ultra-radical, terrorist revolution was not so great as in the year of the Manchester massacre, if only because there were too many powerful and experienced men on the side of the people. At length Wellington admitted that the game was up and called off his peers. The Reform Bill became law in 1832.

It achieved a twofold reconstruction of the parliamentary system. First, it redistributed the seats in accordance with the shift of popula-

tion, a thing that had never been done since Parliament took shape under Edward I. Places then substantial had shrunk to villages or less (the pocket boroughs), and yet returned their two members. Places then insignificant had become great (for example, Manchester) and were still not represented. Second, it abolished all the varying and fanciful rules by which local custom had qualified a very small total body of voters (who sold the seats of their constituencies, hence called the rotten boroughs), and substituted a simple uniform franchise in the towns, and another, rather higher, in the counties. The town vote went to the rate-paying householder whose rent was at least £10 a year, which may be regarded as typically a lower middle-class but not a working-class qualification. The county voter had to be a man of greater substance owning land or paying £50 a year; but the county members remained less numerous than those for the boroughs.

The result of this, the first Reform Act, was to enfranchise the middle classes. It did not send many members drawn from them into the Commons, which remained aristocratic for another forty years. The immediate change, in fact, was surprisingly small. The same members, on the whole, sat after 1832 as had sat before. But they were elected by a new set of voters, and this undoubtedly altered their outlook and actions. The Tories and some of the Whigs had been horrified at the prospect of national ruin when the details of the reform were first made known. Their fears were quite unfounded. Public order improved, and the new Parliament passed sober reforms, many of them agreed on non-party lines. Agreement was the touchstone of subsequent development. There was after all no class war such as had been threatened in the bitter years following Waterloo. There was plenty of party strife, but all classes were represented in both parties. In England, since those days, a man has chosen to be a Liberal or a Tory, not by reason of his social position, but of his inborn temperament, which makes him instinctively like or dislike a given line of political thought. Great Britain owes much to the Whig nobles who carried the reform. Durham and Russell worked out its detail. Durham would have made the franchise wider, but even he was not for full democracy. He knew that the illiterate, fever-stricken towns and the pauperized countryside had yet to undergo a

long regeneration before they could beget men to be entrusted with the fate of their country. The Reform Act of 1832 was the first step towards regeneration.

A new Parliament met in 1833, full of reformers, under the same Whig ministry. The evangelicals were strong in it, and so also were the utilitarian Benthamites. The first-named, inspired by Wilberforce on his death-bed, abolished slavery throughout the Empire and paid the owners twenty millions in compensation. The Tory Shaftesbury originated the first effective Factory Act, piloted through the Commons in 1833 by the Whig minister Lord Althorp. It was a first step in rescuing the mill workers from the iniquities to which they were subject, but it left much to be done. Even after it was passed a child of nine might be made to work nine hours a day, and "young persons" of thirteen twelve hours, while the labour of men was unlimited. If this was reform, what must have been unreform! Shaftesbury was not satisfied, but he knew that it was all that he could get. Brougham induced the state to make the first public expenditure on education, granting small sums to the two associations, Anglican and Nonconformist, that were already providing primary schools. The Utilitarians were bent on reforming poor relief, and their new Poor Law was passed in 1834. Chadwick was its inspirer and subsequently its chief administrator. It abolished the Speenhamland system of doles to employed men, and required all able-bodied applicants for relief to enter workhouses. The ultimate effect was good, for wages had to be raised to subsistence level, and the vast semi-pauper rural population was gradually restored to self-support and self-respect. But the readjustment was slow, and a hungry time intervened, causing a new phase of angry discontent in the ensuing years. The Utilitarians were also active in passing the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, which did for local government what the Act of 1832 had done for Parliament. By establishing councils elected by the ratepayers, it opened the way for the improvement of town life so soon as the ratepayers should rise to their opportunity—which was not an immediate consequence.

Before the Whigs went out Shaftesbury scored one more humanitarian reform, the stoppage of the "climbing boy" abuse, that is, the sweeping of chimneys by small boys sent up them to dislodge the soot.

Much brutality accompanied the practice, which was always injurious and sometimes fatal to the boys. The sweeps obtained these boys from the workhouses in the guise of apprentices, but their true status was that of slaves. Two mechanisms of society belong to the Whig régime: the registration of births, marriages and deaths enacted in 1833, and the penny post for inland letters inaugurated in 1840.

The suffering that immediately resulted from the new Poor Law caused wide and deep resentment. The reform, it seemed, had been to save expenditure to the prosperous at the expense of the poor. The judgement was unjust to the motives of the Benthamites, who were promoters of the good of "the greatest number"; but on a short view it was colourable. An important consequence was a new essay in political Radicalism, the launching of the People's Charter in 1838. Its six points, if carried into effect, would have made Great Britain a democratic republic. It is true that five of them are in practice now under a democratic monarchy, but the spirit of the Chartists was incompatible with that. The effect of institutions is not solely to be judged from the phrases in which they are enacted, but by the nature of the community wherein they are practised. The British masses of 1838, angry and impatient for immediate improvement, read the People's Charter as a revolutionary creed; and yet, after all the provocation, by no means all of them adopted it. How many Chartists there were, none can say. Their leadership was certainly inferior to their numerical strength, but it is clear that the whole working class did not join them. Chartism made headway for some four years by means of mass meetings, conventions, revolutionary oratory and monster petitions with millions of signatures, whose numbers were inflated by wholesale faking. There were outbreaks of violence and leaders were transported. After 1842 the movement lost heart and support. It flared up again in 1848, but only as a momentary flicker, and then died out. Its chief leaders had been William Lovett, an honest man, and Feargus O'Connor, something of a rogue; but neither possessed the talisman of leadership. So failed the beginnings of a class war for which the majority of Englishmen had no inclination.

Another movement begun in the same year, 1838, the Anti-Corn Law League, was an affair of all classes, and ended in complete

triumph. It had first to put in several years of hard work. Dislike of the Corn Laws was widespread and only awaited organization. The leadership came from the cotton manufacturers, the "Manchester School", who believed that their products would conquer the world if only trade were freed of restrictions. The best of them also genuinely desired to better the condition of the poor by cheapening bread; and of these best Richard Cobden and John Bright were the outstanding leaders. Their proceedings are bound up with the public events of the 'forties.

The Whigs, latterly under Lord Melbourne, had outlived their popularity by 1841. They had worked for social reform, as also had Peel's Tories, and yet the people were suffering and angry. The Whig leaders had no talent for finance. The landed interest supported the Corn Laws for protection of its special produce, but no one any longer wanted the mass of import duties on all other goods, which were hindering trade and perpetuating the bad time. It was time to make a clean sweep, and the Whigs lacked the ability to do it. Peel was a first-rate finance minister. He won the general election of 1841 and entered upon a ministry which is the divide between the hungry hatreds of the early nineteenth century and the mid-Victorian prosperity.

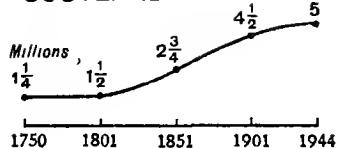
In the next four years Peel introduced a large measure of free trade by a series of budgets which abolished or diminished the customs dues and raised revenue by an income tax instead; free trade, that is, in all things but corn, which he had pledged himself to the Tory voters not to touch. Meanwhile the Anti-Corn Law League was conducting an agitation which left the Chartists in the shade. Hundreds of organizers and lecturers toured the country by virtue of the growing railway facilities. Thousands of leaflets were distributed by the new penny post. Bright fired great audiences with an oratory far above anything the Radicals could show, and Cobden conquered intellects with his orderly marshalling of hard facts. There was no incitement to violence, not an instant's thought of a decision elsewhere than in Parliament. It was a political campaign of a sort that had not been seen before.

Peel grew more and more perturbed, for Cobden had converted him, and he could not honourably continue to prosecute a policy

in which he disbelieved. The ministry had been fruitful in other reforms: the Coal Mines Act of 1842, ending the disgrace of women harnessed to trucks underground or climbing ladders with loads of coal on their shoulders, and of little children shut up for unlimited hours in the dark, tending ventilators; the penny-a-mile railway law already referred to; the Bank Charter Act of 1844, stabilizing the currency; the Factory Act of the same year, reducing the hours for children and meant to fix a ten-hour limit for men, but muddled in the drafting so that it had to be superseded by the Ten Hours Act of 1847. The sun seemed to be shining at length, and trade revived under the stimulus of Peel's finance and the new railway transport. There was even a series of good harvests, which did not altogether suit the Manchester School. And then in 1845-6 came a year of disaster and crisis, of which the originating cause was in Ireland.

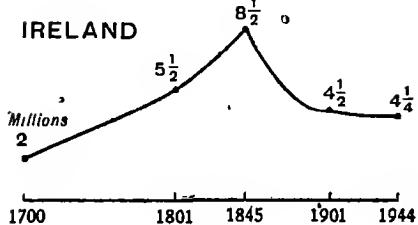
The ancient Irish Parliament had been abolished in 1800 and the Irish members had thenceforward sat in the United Kingdom Parliament at Westminster. Daniel O'Connell, whose leadership had secured Catholic Emancipation, for mainly Irish Catholics, in 1829, was now heading a movement for repeal of the union or, as we should call it, Home Rule. Although his speeches were inflammatory and his audiences inflammable, he meant to keep the peace, and already his command was being challenged by younger men with no such inhibition. All this, however, was common form in Ireland and caused no special anxiety. The real disabilities of Ireland were not political but social, and the greatest of them was that she had a population twice as large as the land could safely carry, with no industries to support the surplus. What caused it is not clear, but Irish population rose from little more than two millions in 1700 to six millions in 1800 and then to eight and a half millions in 1845. The greater part of the people were peasants cultivating potatoes on small-holdings which they rented from the landowners, mostly Irish and not, as is often supposed, English. Potatoes were the staple food of a population living always on the verge of starvation. In 1845 a disease smote the plants and the potato crop failed so utterly that famine supervened. Numbers died before anything could be done, and much greater numbers would die unless relief could be promptly organized. In that same summer the weather caused a

### SCOTLAND



### THE POPULATIONS OF THE BRITISH ISLES

### IRELAND



41 3/4 1944

### W A L E S

32 1/2 1901

### A N D

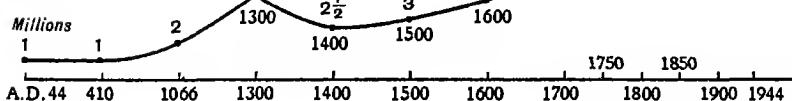
17 3/4 1851

9 1/2 1801

5 1/2 1750

6 1/2 1700

Millions



### E N G L A N D

Note: Mediaeval figures are uncertain.  
modern figures before 1801 are  
only estimates: from 1801 onwards  
a census was taken.

disastrous English harvest. "It rained away the Corn Laws", men said afterwards. The work of the League had been so effective that only a bad harvest was needed to clinch it.

The Corn Laws by now were very different from the ferocious prohibition of 1815. Successive modifications had lowered the sliding scale to a modest barrier. Yet a barrier it was, and public sentiment demanded the immediate reduction of the price of corn required to avert wholesale death in Ireland. Peel saw that the Corn Laws must go. He, pledged to the landed interest, was not the man to do it, and he tried to get Russell and the Whigs to take office and strike the blow. Russell refused. Peel made his decision. He repudiated his pledge and broke his party for the public good. The Corn Laws were repealed early in 1846 by a minority of Peel's Tories aided by Whig votes. The Tory majority under Benjamin Disraeli revolted and drove their great prime minister from office. He never came back, for he was killed by a vicious horse in 1850.

Russell and the Whigs came in when Peel went out. The Peelite Tories, who included William Ewart Gladstone, generally supported them. They completed the free trade programme by removing most of the remaining duties and repealing what was left of the Navigation Acts. At the same time the wise policy of Peel bore fruit. Trade not only revived but took a permanent upward trend. Employment grew and remained good. The real value of wages, and with it the standard of living, increased. The workhouse was no longer a terror for industrious men. Even the towns began at length to grow sweeter, their councils sanitarily directed by Edwin Chadwick's new Board of Health of 1848. The decade which had set in under the stigma of "the hungry 'forties" went out in a cheerful optimism that was not to be belied.

## 6. *The New Colonial Empire*

The British Empire did not die with the acknowledgement of American independence, and in the Napoleonic War the plantations, trade routes and strategic ports were the care of statesmen, while the defence of India was as anxiously watched over as that of Sussex. It has none the less been often said that after the American failure

there was no further interest in settlement colonies. To a certain extent this was so; yet so large exceptions as Canada and Australia, both the scenes of new settlement soon after 1783, do not leave a great deal of truth in the general statement.

India, however, claimed prime attention. From Wellesley's time there was a generation in which the Company was served by an extraordinarily brilliant and gifted succession of men, ready and resourceful, public-spirited and independent in character. They were the Indian counterparts of the men who beat Napoleon in Europe; and since they continued to find constructive work to their hands in India their type endured longer there. After 1813 Indian trade was a very small part of the Company's concerns, and Indian government almost everything. Its task for the next half-century was to come to terms with the Indian powers and spread the British peace to the Himalayas and the Afghan mountains.

Wellesley had challenged and defeated the Marathas of central India, but had been recalled before completing their overthrow. Disorder therefore recommenced and spread for a dozen years until in 1817-18 Lord Hastings made a final pacification by overcoming the military bandits who terrorized the country and the Maratha princes who supported them. Before this he had been obliged to fight the Gurkhas of Nepal on account of their depredations in northern India. This, the one and only Gurkha war, ended in mutual respect and a friendship typified by the service and fame of volunteer Gurkha regiments in the armies of British India. The North West was now the only region with threatening problems, and it did not yet become active. Meanwhile, under Lord William Bentinck, internal reform was begun. Widow-burning and ritual murders were suppressed, and Macaulay the historian founded a system of education. His decision that instruction should be in the English tongue and English subjects of learning was momentous. It has given educated Indians what they had never previously had, a common language and body of knowledge, and so has made possible all the development towards Indian nationhood that has since taken place. But for the common use of English the deliberations of an Indian Parliament would be as crippled and sterile as were those of the League of Nations at Geneva, where speeches had

to be tediously translated to a bored and weary audience.

The North West came to life in 1839, when the British took alarm at supposed Russian designs and sought to place an Amir of their own choosing on the throne of Afghanistan. The attempt failed and was abandoned after a military disaster. British prestige was lowered, and the Sikh military power in the Punjab was tempted to invade British India. Its assault caused the hardest fighting till then experienced. In the first war, 1845-6, the British threw back the invaders and established a protectorate in the Punjab. In 1848-9 its warriors tried again. This time they were completely routed and the Punjab annexed. Its conversion within a few years into a loyal province was the work of Henry and John Lawrence, two of the most notable men of an outstanding half-century.

The annexation was the decision of Lord Dalhousie, a new governor-general who arrived in 1848. Dalhousie believed in annexations for the good of the population annexed, for he believed also that the British could supply an infinitely better government than any native power had ever been able to do. In his eight years he annexed various small areas and ended with a large one, the kingdom of Oude in 1856, as he had begun with a large one in the Punjab. Meanwhile he sought to introduce the new British devices into a stagnating civilization. He constructed trunk roads, canals and a telegraph service, introduced the new postage prepaid by stamps, and planned an Indian railway system. These were steps in a long-term policy of improvement of a society in which the city life was more deadly and the country life more poverty-stricken than in post-Waterloo England. Dalhousie was energy personified, but he did not look to the Indian Army as he should have done; and a year after his departure the Mutiny was destined to break out.

Farther east the new age witnessed great developments. Sir Stamford Raffles, who had governed Java when it was in British possession, obtained the uninhabited island of Singapore from its Malay owners in 1819. There he established a free port, open without restriction to the shipping of all nations. It was a new plan in the Far East, where prohibitions and monopolies were the rule, and it justified its author. In a few years Singapore was an *entrepot* into which was poured the produce of many countries, to the ultimate

benefit of the British enterprise which could provide markets in Europe and manufactures in exchange. In 1833 the East India Company lost its last monopoly, the China trade at Canton, and became thenceforward solely an agency for governing India. The private merchants who succeeded to the tea trade were not so successful with the Chinese as the Company had been. Contrary to Chinese law they carried opium from India in exchange for tea. The Chinese government protested, although its mandarins at Canton connived at the traffic in order to collect bribes. Finally the Emperor's viceroy demanded the surrender of all opium, which was yielded and the stuff destroyed. He then made impossible demands and attacked the British shipping. In the ensuing war (1839-42) it was determined that the position of traders must be made more secure. Five "treaty ports" were opened to trade, and Hongkong was ceded to great Britain as a base for its protection.

So far as true colonies were concerned, the old colonial Empire had been grouped around the North Atlantic. This was not so in the new colonial Empire that arose after 1783. The Cape Colony at the southern tip of Africa was to be one of its major units, and two others were to be founded in the South Pacific whose possibilities had been made known by Captain Cook.

The new colonization began, however, amid the old scenes. After the acknowledgement of American independence the loyalists in the late war found themselves on the losing side and suffered persecution from the victorious republicans. The loyalists migrated in order to retain their British citizenship. Some moved into Nova Scotia from which they carved off the new settlement of New Brunswick. The majority went into Canada proper, where they settled on the northern shores of Lakes Erie and Ontario and with toil and privation made the province of Upper Canada, now Ontario. It was "upper" because higher up the St. Lawrence than the French-Canadian province of Quebec, brought into the Empire by the Seven Years War and known in this period as Lower Canada. George III granted the pioneers the title of United Empire Loyalists, and his ministers helped them to establish themselves. After the Napoleonic War large numbers of new colonists from the British Isles went out to join them.

The British entry into Australia was due to more than one motive. There was an idea that plantations might be possible in its northern parts, to be worked by Asiatic labour and to produce valuable export crops. Some thought also that trading bases there would be useful for penetrating the Asiatic archipelago to the northward. There was a fear that the French were meditating similar plans and a desire to forestall them. But ultimately the decision to colonize sprang from a domestic problem, the disposal of the large number of convicts created by the severity of the eighteenth-century criminal law. Although the western shores of Australia had been discovered by the Dutch, its much more attractive eastern coast was unknown until Captain Cook sailed along it in 1770. Seventeen years later the first colonizing expedition set sail, and in 1788 laid the foundation of Sydney in the country which Cook had named New South Wales.

For a generation New South Wales was primarily a penal settlement, its society consisting of prisoners, soldiers and officials. But this could not last. The time-expired convicts were not given passages back to England, and most of them remained as free settlers in the country. The discharged soldiers also settled, and retired officials obtained large grants of land. Free settlers began to emigrate from Great Britain. Thus the convict element was swamped as the nineteenth century progressed, and the free Australians demanded that transportation should be stopped. It was stopped in 1840 in New South Wales, and in Tasmania, a daughter colony, a few years later.

During the post-Waterloo years of tension and distress the question of emigration was much discussed in the British Isles. It was naturally connected with that of the growth of population, but no one knew just what that amounted to until the census of 1801, the first to be taken, gave a base-line, and those of 1811 and 1821 the requisite graph of the whole tendency. The unemployment due to war and post-war conditions and the mishandling of trade was set down to increasing population, and in the 'twenties emigration became a subject for statesmen. A pioneer body went out to South Africa in 1820 with government aid, and founded the Albany Settlement in the eastern district of Cape Colony, which their descendants still inhabit. Sir Robert Wilmot Horton, Under-Secretary for the

Colonies in 1822, promoted state-aided emigration to Canada. Finance was the difficulty, but Wilmot Horton was able to score some success on a modest scale. In these years a considerable independent exodus was going on from overcrowded Ireland and from the Scottish Highlands, where also the population was outrunning the means of livelihood. The majority of the emigrants went to Upper Canada, although a few settled east of the French in Lower Canada.

The most notable organizer of emigration was Edward Gibbon Wakefield. He put forward a doctrine which integrated land, capital and labour in a carefully planned proportion to produce a well-balanced colony, which he sought to make a reproduction in more fortunate circumstances of the British social order at home. In Wakefield's colonies, however, it was to be a society purged of its errors. There would be differences of rank and fortune, just as there were bound to be differences of merit and ability, but there should be no very rich nor very poor, no politically privileged nor unprivileged, no idlers, and, above all, no convicts. Wakefield insisted always that colonists must not be the rejects but the best that the mother country could produce. Here he spoke with knowledge of baser humanity, for he had been in prison himself for running off with an heiress.

All the above sounds somewhat theoretical and similar to dozens of model schemes of land settlement which have sprouted and died to our own time. But Wakefield was more than a theorist, and he did put his ideas into practice; never completely, for he was never in unfettered control, but sufficiently to demonstrate their essential soundness, to convert others to his general principles, and to leave his mark indelibly upon Australia and New Zealand.

There had been a settlement at the Swan River in Western Australia in 1829. Although it took root on a modest scale it had a hard struggle to survive, owing to the errors of the promoters. These were manifold, but Wakefield as chief critic seized upon one, the excessively liberal land grants which made every man an owner and none a labourer. This, said Wakefield, meant dispersion, no mutual help, no labour for clearing the land and starting cultivation, all energy expended on transport, and a general waste of effort and a society so inefficient that it amounted to none. He wanted above all things a

compact settlement, taking up no more land than it could use, and functioning as a community, not as a series of Robinson Crusoes sprinkled over a wilderness. He proposed to obtain it by charging a substantial price for the land to those who could pay it, and using the money as an emigration fund to assist the passages of those who could not. From this point of view Canada and South Africa did not interest him, for their populations were already committed to other methods. Neither did New South Wales, except in its large unoccupied hinterlands. He looked for virgin soil.

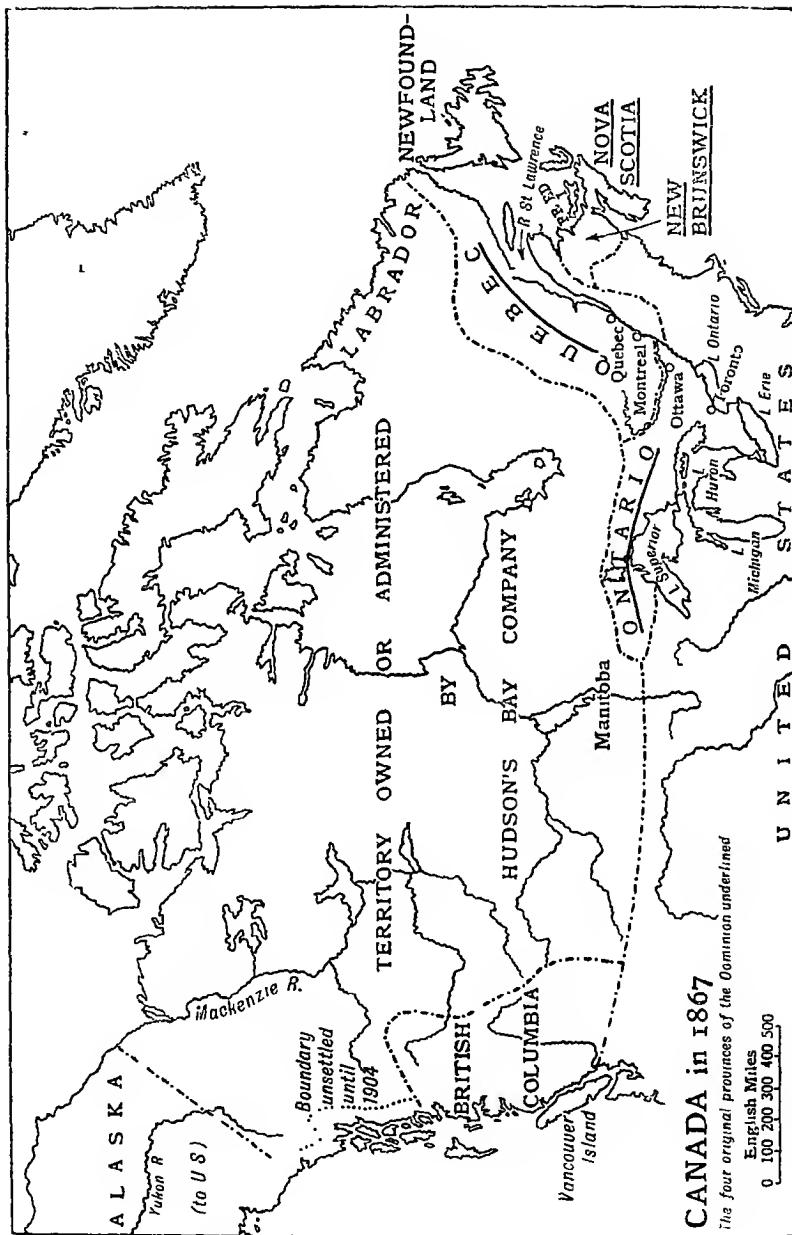
He found it first in South Australia, where Sturt and other explorers had revealed a region of good land and attractive climate about St. Vincent Gulf and the lower Murray River. Wakefield formed the South Australian Association as a governing body for the venture and secured state support, coupled, however, with a Colonial Office supervision that irked him. He himself took exception to the price to be charged for the land, which he declared to be too low, and he severed his connection with the venture. It went forward on the general principles he had laid down. Among the most valuable of these was the careful selection of the emigrants and the care taken of them on the long voyage. In 1836 a fine body of settlers landed in St. Vincent Gulf and sited Adelaide. They had some initial troubles, for the Wakefield plans were not impeccable at all points, but they did after a few years make South Australia a great success. Much of the credit was due to Sir George Grey, an early Governor.

Meanwhile Wakefield turned his roving eye to New Zealand. Its coast had been explored by Cook, and some two thousand white adventurers, from missionaries to escaped convicts, were already living among the Maori tribesmen in conditions of growing disorder. The British Government was very unwilling to annex or intervene effectively. Wakefield determined that it should, and formed the New Zealand Company to force its hand. "We are going, I think, to colonize New Zealand," he remarked. The Company began to acquire land from the Maoris and to send out settlers in 1839. Without an authoritative government the results would have been chaotic, and Great Britain was obliged to annex New Zealand in 1840. Land-purchase disputes and Maori wars ensued, but in the main New Zealand prospered, and flourishing British communities of the sort

imagined by Wakefield took firm root. His Company did its best work in supervising the emigration. Sir George Grey, transferred from South Australia, was the most effective of the pioneer Governors.

The problem of colonial government received its solution in these years, primarily from the hand of Lord Durham, who had already done so much for British reform. The idea of the mercantile Empire organized for profit by means of monopolies was passing away. Men were now thinking of settlement colonies as a social expansion of the mother country, rendered necessary by the fact that there were too many people for the available land in the British Isles. The new communities naturally thought themselves entitled to the same liberties as the old from which they sprang, and the foremost of these was the control of their administration by themselves upon the spot. How was that to be reconciled with any general governance of the Empire from London? Don't attempt to reconcile it, answered the Manchester School and some of the Radicals; let the colonies go; they are of no profit to us, and we may be dragged into war to defend them. Durham was a Radical of a different sort. He believed in liberty as much as any man, but he believed also that the bonds of blood and common origin were real. So in fact did the colonists, who wanted full liberty but did not want to lose their British citizenship. Facing realities in wild lands, they valued that more perhaps than did the cotton-spinning fraternity in Manchester.

The question first became urgent in Canada, where it was complicated by the jealousy existing between the French and the British elements. There was general dissatisfaction in both provinces with the administration by officials from the Colonial Office. Land was unfairly distributed, jobs went by favour, and men who lacked influence could not succeed. Canadians, both French and British, were inclined to exaggerate the misgovernment, but the root cause of their discontent, the want of the power to misgovern themselves, was not yet defined. Lord Durham went to Canada and defined it, after an insurrection, little more than an angry demonstration, had shaken both provinces in 1837. The main remedy expressed in the Durham Report was responsible government: the administration not by permanent officials from Whitehall but by cabinet ministers responsible to the majority in the legislature elected by the colonists. If the



CANADA in 1867

*The four original provinces of the Dominion underlined*

English Miles  
0 100 200 300 400 500

ministers lost their majority, just as in England, they would have to resign. This system had been clearly established in Great Britain only since the Reform Act of 1832, before which it would not have been true to regard the Commons as elected by the people. Durham, who published his report in 1839, had not taken long to extend the principle to the colonies. He was convinced that it would not mean the disruption of the Empire, and he was right. The free communities have never ceased to co-operate, and have done far more for the common cause than could ever have been exacted by compulsion.

Durham died in 1840, and there were doubters among Whigs and Tories. The new Canada Act of 1840 did not mention responsible government. But it came in almost inevitably when once the report had defined it, and within ten years it was in full operation in Canada. The principle being established, its extension was easy. In 1855-6 the Australian colonies and New Zealand asked for and received responsible government. The Cape Colony followed later, and the other settlement colonies in their turns as they emerged from the formative stage. To-day we have largely accomplished an immense further undertaking, the creation of responsible government for the four hundred millions of India.

The colonies of the new empire were as diverse in their development as in their origins. In South Africa British settlers, missionaries and administrators impinged upon a society of seventeenth-century Dutch Calvinists stiffened by an admixture of French Calvinists who had fled from the persecution of Louis XIV. It was a stubborn combination from which no harmonious welcome could be expected. The Old Testament Boers hated the New Testament missionaries with their doctrine of the brotherhood of black men and white. The Boers muttered ever more loudly as decision after decision went against them: equality of black and white before the law, emancipation of the slaves, disallowance of an annexation of Kafir territory made by the only popular British Governor, and his resignation in consequence. The Boers, the Tories of South Africa, felt that they were being swallowed by a radical tide. In 1836 the most active of them trekked out of the colony with wrath in their hearts. Within a few years they would have trekked in any case, for they were becoming straitened for land, and that was the



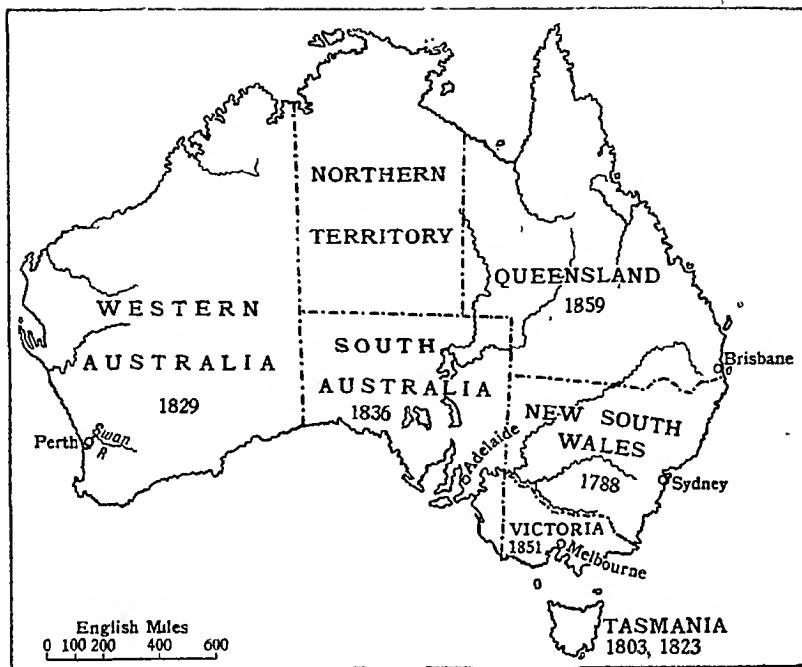
### SOUTH AFRICA, 1854

Note that the north-west part of Cape Colony was unattractive and that the better country to the north-east attracted the Boer trekkers from 1836. They founded Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal, but in 1843 the British annexed Natal, and in subsequent years most of the Boers trekked out of it.

real motive with most of them. But the grievances, which were genuine and substantial, hastened them and darkened their mood. The seventeenth century cast off the rule of the nineteenth to achieve another fifty years of undisturbed conservatism. By 1854 South Africa had taken shape as two British colonies, the Cape and Natal, with coastlines and seaports; and two up-country republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, in which no intolerable law restrained a white man from his natural lordship over the black.

Before transportation ended Australia had discovered wealth in her grasslands, where innumerable sheep produced wool to lade hundreds of ships. Australia's trekkers were the squatters who drove their flocks across ever new horizons. By 1830 the wool export had grown great, just as the English cloth manufacture was becoming fully mechanized by the inclusion of the weaving in the factories. For another century it continued to grow greater. In 1851 there was another and by contrast a sudden development, the discovery of the Ballarat goldfield in the colony of Victoria, newly separated from New South Wales. The gold called to all the world and quintupled the population of Victoria in five years. Other finds followed, and Australian and New Zealand gold played its part in fertilizing the mid-Victorian prosperity throughout the Empire, just as Indian silver had helped to capitalize the industrial developments of ninety years before.

Canada kept the lead in political development. First in responsible government, she was first in creating a dominion or combination of colonies. In 1867 the two St. Lawrence provinces, Quebec and Ontario (ex-Lower and Upper Canada) federated with the two maritime provinces, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, to form the Dominion of Canada. At Ottawa, its new capital, sat the Dominion Parliament—Governor-General, Prime Minister and Cabinet, Senate, House of Commons—while each province retained its special administration and council for more local affairs. Four provinces founded the Dominion, but admission was open, and since then five more have extended the Dominion across the prairies and the Rockies to the Pacific. Newfoundland, twice as old as Ontario, has remained apart in solitary seniority.



### AUSTRALIA, 1859

New South Wales as annexed in 1788 comprised Tasmania and the entire eastern part of Australia, but only the region round Sydney was occupied. Tasmania (then named Van Diemen's Land) was colonized in 1803 and made a separate government in 1823. Victoria and Queensland were similarly colonized as parts of New South Wales and separated in 1851 and 1859. Western and South Australia were colonized by expeditions direct from England.

*7. Mid-Victoria*

In the mid-Victorian period foreign affairs and the wide world take the place of domestic grievances and reforms as the leading concerns of the British people. After cleaning up his frowsty and dilapidated home John Bull began to look about him and take interest in the open air. Prosperity, stimulated by Peel's liberation of trade, had begun in the early 'forties but had suffered reverse in '45. The repeal of the Corn Laws set it going again. The effect was moral rather than material. There was no great fall in the price of corn, and the cost of living was hardly lowered. But it was felt that a great decision had been made, that the interest of the people must stand before that of a section; and the bitterness of the defeated section was a measure of the victory that had been won for the cause of justice and equality. The stimulus was unmistakable, and all kinds of activities, including aggrieved agriculture herself, took new heart and energy.

The industrial revolution was spreading into countries hitherto untouched, and the new transport was in demand the world over. There was thus a great and growing market for British machinery, railway equipment and steam shipping. The new colonial populations multiplied and called for British textiles. The railway system in Great Britain, developed in advance of that in any other country, reduced costs of production by giving cheap and rapid movement of goods between the ports and the factories. Free trade yielded unhampered disposal. Not a penny was levied on goods going out, and nothing on any coming in that might check production. Costs of manufacture were therefore low. Some employers said that without the Factory Acts they might be lower still, but others held that the improved quality of fairly-treated labour redressed the balance. In any case, the passing of the Factory Acts, like the repealing of the Corn Laws, was the kind of reform that cannot be undone; and the trade unions, now recognized and strong, were there to keep an eye on it. The Australian gold of the 'fifties increased the capital fund and expanded purchasing power. Steam transit on the sea began to establish itself, after a much longer struggle than on land. The decisive stages in its victory were marked by the screw propeller,

the compound engine, the surface condenser, and iron in place of wood for hulls. These did more than accelerate transport. They saved British merchant shipping from a serious American challenge. In the 'forties and 'fifties American sailing-ships became fast and enterprising, and the Americans used native timber such as the British had to import. But the change to engines and iron restored the position, for British engineering was then supreme. In the Civil War of the 'sixties the Americans destroyed much of their own shipping, and when it was over they could not revive their competition. Rowland Hill's postage stamps, introduced for domestic use in 1840, were covering the world ten years later; just before or just after 1850 is the date of the first issues in most of the countries of the British Empire. Telegraphs likewise were spreading underseas, with North Sea and Mediterranean cables laid in the 'fifties and Atlantic and Indian Ocean lines before the next decade was out.

Agriculture shared in the general well-being. A fair amount of corn was imported, but prospering England was able to buy more and eat more, and the home output was maintained. It still dominated the situation in the sense that a good or bad harvest affected the price of bread. The day was yet distant when the urban Englishman would neither know nor care whether the crops had flourished or failed. In the mid-Victorian age importation was from old lands with working costs comparable to those of England and with transport still expensive enough to equal an import duty of 10s. a quarter. The defeat of the British farmer was to come later with the exploitation of virgin prairie and mechanized handling in bulk. For thirty years after the repeal farmers prospered and land rents rose, while the landless labourers made at least a living wage and no longer cringed for doles.

In 1854 the long peace was broken by war with Russia. The Crimean War is now generally recognized to have been caused by political incompetence and prolonged by military imbecility. Lord Palmerston had a general responsibility for the anti-Russian policy, although he was Home Secretary and not in control of diplomacy at the outbreak of the war. The mass of the people, having forgotten what war was like, entered the struggle gladly and fought by deputy; for there was no national service, and the regular army

endured all the casualties. The early blunders aroused a storm of indignation, amid which Palmerston became prime minister and effected some improvements. With one brief interval he remained prime minister for the next ten years. The only result of the Crimean War was to give a new lease of life to the decaying Turkish supremacy over the peoples of the Balkans.

The year after the Russian peace terrible news came from India. In May 1857 the so-called Bengal army, which was distributed all over northern India, broke into mutiny. Dalhousie's reforms and annexations had much to do with it, and particularly his last, the annexation of Oude, for a large proportion of the troops were recruited from that kingdom. No less had his policy of transferring the best army officers to employment in his newer services been bad for discipline, while reports of the Crimean War were bad for British prestige. These things produced the conditions for an outbreak. The notorious greased cartridges were the precipitating cause. The first explosion nearly wiped out British power from Calcutta north-westwards to the Punjab. But the two ends of the long corridor held. There was no rising at Calcutta and none, thanks to Sir John Lawrence, in the Punjab. Between the two Sir Henry Lawrence held Lucknow and was killed there, but the garrison endured until relieved; another small British group failed to hold Cawnpore and were all massacred; and at Delhi the mutineers took possession and proclaimed a new Mogul Empire, but a force from the Punjab besieged them and stormed the city in September. After this the Mutiny was put down. It was what it is named, a military revolt, not a national rising. The rule of the East India Company was ended in 1858, and the Crown took direct control. The change was more nominal than real, for the Company had long ceased to be a trading body and had become a department of state.

Palmerston was the great man of all these years, the favourite of the public although disliked by Queen Victoria, the dominant figure in politics, the only prime minister likely to retain office. His interest and ability lay in foreign affairs, and he had no zeal for domestic reform. In his earlier career as Foreign Secretary to the Whig government of the Reform Act he had great work to his credit in settling the Belgian and Syrian questions with satisfaction

to vital British interests and without the French war that might easily have resulted from either of them. As he grew old he lost his touch, although the public never lost faith in him. He made a disproportionate fuss over one Don Pacifico, a shady character who claimed British citizenship and complained of maltreatment in Greece. He entered on a second war with China in 1856-60 on account of treaty infractions and oppression of British merchants. There was substance in the complaints, but the particular case on which Palmerston took action was a Chinese domestic affair and only by the barest technicality a British grievance at all. His most amiable characteristic was a hatred of despots. In the true Whig tradition he loathed the Czar's tyranny in Poland, and the Austrian Emperor's in Italy. For Italian liberty he did achieve something substantial, but for the Poles nothing, although there might have been a chance at the end of the Crimean War. He had a partiality for Napoleon III, the second Bonaparte Emperor of the French, and twice lost office by obliging him, on the first occasion to the disgust of Queen Victoria, and on the second to that of the British people. That was in 1858, when there was much war-talk on either side of the Channel. Palmerston made a friendly gesture to the French and found himself, for the only time in his life, condemned by his own people for doing it. It was a temporary defeat, and he was back again as prime minister next year. His last transaction was his least fortunate, the encouragement to Denmark to expect British aid against German aggression. When it came to the point, the aid could not be given, and Palmerston was proved to have been bluffing. He died next year, 1865, still high in the admiration and affection of the English people.

Palmerston was the last of the Whigs. His lieutenant, Gladstone, was the first and greatest of the Liberals. The Liberals as a party were the product of one phase of the changing times. The middle-class ascendancy produced them as the mid-Victorian age set in, they flourished mightily under Gladstone and began to disintegrate in his declining years, they lost hold on the new democracy, and were shattered after the first German war. This is of the Liberals with a capital L; liberalism as a habit of mind is as old as history and does not die; but it does not now coincide to any great extent with

a party allegiance, and most natural liberals nowadays rank themselves with Conservatives or Socialists. Gladstone's strongest characteristic was hatred of injustice, which made him at one with Palmerston on the liberation of Italy. In home affairs he made it the creed of the Liberals to attack abuses such as administrative muddles and the law's delays, class privileges, religious discrimination and the withholding of political rights; and to promote true equality, both of status and opportunity, liberty consistent with the common good, thrifty finance and low taxation. Freedom and opportunity may sum up what Gladstone completed for the British people, and sought for the Irish. He was less inspired to devise state assistance to individuals, and the socialistic legislation of his successor would have appalled him. Under Palmerston there was much that he itched to do, but he held his peace and added to prosperity by a series of masterly budgets in Peel's tradition. As soon as Palmerston died, Gladstone was busy at once on a new reform of Parliament, to enfranchise the working men.

Benjamin Disraeli had once been with Gladstone a follower of Peel. They parted company on the Corn Laws. Gladstone supported his leader in abolishing them. Disraeli attacked him with brilliant vehemence. The Conservative party was split, the Peelites drifted off to serve under Palmerston and convert the Whigs into Liberals, while Disraeli and the main body made only fitful reappearances in office for the rest of the mid-Victorian period. Disraeli had got rid of his superior officer and succeeded to the command, but it is doubtful if he thereby hastened his own accession to real power, for which he had long to wait. He believed in the extension of the franchise and was prepared to go farther than the Liberals into the sphere of constructive reform. It was his contribution to the country's political life to show that Toryism and democracy were not antagonistic. Gladstone and Disraeli were natural opponents by reason of their conflicting characters and interpretations of life's purpose, they were sundered by the parting of the ways in their own past records, and they were the leaders of parties whose differences at that time coincided with a fundamental division between human temperaments. As was said in one of those jests that embody much truth, an Englishman was from birth either a little Liberal or a little Conservative.

Yet these two protagonists in what was to be a classic contest united at the outset to effect the second reform of Parliament.

Gladstone introduced a Reform Bill in 1866 and was defeated by the back-bench elements who were not convinced that reform was necessary. It undoubtedly was, for the working class had been transformed since 1832, when it had been left out of the franchise as unfit to exercise it. It was now self-respecting and determined to exact respect, and incensed at the tone of the arguments employed by Robert Lowe, who had led the Liberal revolt against Gladstone's bill. John Bright inspired a reform agitation in the country with all the glowing oratory which had slain the Corn Laws twenty years before. Gladstone resigned and Disraeli took office. He introduced a more thoroughgoing bill than Gladstone's, and the combined forward elements in both parties passed it against the opposition of those in each who hung back. The result was achieved by men of all classes and agreed by the leaders of the two political parties. The Second Reform Act (1867) gave the vote to all male householders and permanent lodgers in the boroughs, and in the less numerous county constituencies lowered the £50 franchise of 1832 to £12. Substantially it enfranchised the working class in the towns and the middle class in the counties. Seats were redistributed in accordance with the thirty-five years' shift of population, but this was naturally less important than in 1832, when four centuries' arrears had to be overtaken.

The new voters were not grateful to Disraeli, and Gladstone came in with a thumping majority in the general election of 1868. His programme of reform, and notably of Irish reform, was momentous. But its interests stretch forward into the century's later years, and meanwhile there were other things that were setting limits to the rich, secure, hopeful mid-Victorian age. From the end of the Corn Laws to the early 'seventies we may regard as the high summer of the nineteenth century. Thereafter a chill grew in the air. ✓

When Louis Napoleon, nephew of the first Emperor, overthrew the French Republic in 1851 and became the Emperor Napoleon III, some feared another Napoleonic War. It did not come, for the new sovereign was a student of history and had no mind to join the roll of the continental dictators who have challenged England. From the outset he sought friendship and fought as our ally in the Crimean

War and in China. There were moments of irritation and irresponsible talk of war, especially in 1858-9, but neither government intended it. As the 'sixties progressed the risk of Prussia put Franco-British relations more at ease, for it is only when France has been the supreme military power of the continent that she has been a danger to British liberty. Palmerston was justified in expecting no harm from the Second Empire. He seems not to have realized that a yet mightier military power was arising in Germany; or perhaps he did realize it when he bluffed over Denmark in 1864 and his bluff was called. The later stages came after his death.

Bismarck unified Germany under Prussian leadership in three short and easily successful wars. The first was with Denmark, the second in 1866 with Austria. It had been expected to last for years, and it was over in seven weeks. Military organization of a quality and scope never before imagined brought superior forces quickly into position, and superior weapons gave them crushing victory. France, which had hitherto looked patronizingly on Prussia, was left with something to think about. She preferred self-deception to honest thought and continued to imagine herself a match for a military machine which had stolen a march on her. In 1870 Bismarck provoked his last war, which was all over in six months. The Second Empire ended at Sedan with the surrender of the main French army in September. French national resistance under a republic held out till January, when the end came with the fall of Paris after a long siege. France had to cede Alsace and Lorraine. Before Paris in December the confederated princes and generals of Germany acknowledged the Prussian king their Emperor. So Germany was consolidated and the Hohenzollern empire founded, to endure until 1918.

These things were a portent to England, but were not at once fully recognized as such. Obviously the British army, small, scattered over the world, and still in the Crimean condition of organization and training, had ceased to count in continental comparisons. Obviously also the German army, which was the greatest force in the German state, had no moral or ethical restraints in attacking its neighbours. The more inoffensive they might be, the more likely to be attacked. But the situation was partly disguised. Bismarck had got all he wanted by war, and desired peace for a period of consolidation. There was

a marked pro-German opinion in England, due partly to the Queen and the royal family, whose marriages were almost exclusively German; partly to admiration for German music and science; partly to Thomas Carlyle's political doctrine of the strong being entitled to rule the weak, and his persuasive glorification of Prussian militarism. Germany, it was generally felt, might become a danger and needed watching. But so long as she was content to dominate the continent without further violent aggression, leaving oceanic enterprise to Great Britain, the situation could be endured. It meant that the Palmerstonian diplomacy was ended. Under Gladstone England sang small in Europe.

One permanent achievement of the Second Empire, completed a year before the crash, was the Suez Canal. Designed and constructed by French skill and enterprise, and opened by Napoleon III with great pomp in 1869, it has been of comparatively little value to France as a world power. Great Britain has been the chief beneficiary, although at the outset an unwilling one. For Palmerston, who foresaw that British communications through the Canal with India would be less easy to defend than by the Cape route, looked on the project with displeasure. Once in action, the Canal proved its advantages to world trade; and that, in the then conditions, meant mainly British trade. It shortened imperial communications and hastened the supersession of the sailing-ship by the steamer. It was the cause also of the opening of East Africa, hitherto inaccessible in a backwater.

For its own good it was time that East Africa was opened. It was the scene of a slave-trade even more devastating than that which the Europeans had carried on in West Africa. In East Africa the Arabs from the Persian Gulf and southern Arabia occupied all the seaports under the general overlordship of the Sultan of Zanzibar. They used the interior as a hunting-ground in which to capture slaves for their own plantations and for all the countries of the Middle East. Their methods were cruel and reckless, and the majority of their victims died on the way to servitude. David Livingstone, a self-educated Scottish factory boy, after some astonishing missionary travels in South Africa, devoted himself to the redemption of these East African countries. He believed that slaving

could be stopped only by European penetration, and he knew by experience that missionary exhortations were of no avail. He made it his task to explore and report and prepare the way for civilized commerce and government. He traced the whole course of the Zambezi, then penetrated the country north of it, discovered Nyasa and other lakes, and died in 1873 near Lake Tanganyika. Livingstone was the hero of the mid-Victorians. There were other notable African missionaries and explorers in these years, but he was the prince of them all. In a sense he typified the method of the period, action and first-hand report from the field; whereas Wilberforce had been the pioneer of the earlier reform, the collection of evidence in England and action in Parliament. Both succeeded, Wilberforce in West Africa, Livingstone in East. Within a few years of his death the Arab slave-trade was on the way to extinction.

### III

## THE BRITISH PEOPLES IN THE MODERN WORLD

### 1. *The New World-Conditions*

THE Franco-German War of 1870 precipitated a change in the fortunes of the civilized world. The period of liberal advance in Europe ended. Even if it had not achieved all that was hoped, its principles had been generally avowed, and the ideas of nationalism coupled with liberty, of government with the consent of the governed, of a general freeing of trade, of common effort for the good of mankind, had made some progress. France under Napoleon III had been liberal in most of these respects, and France was now struck down. The German victories supplanted liberalism by the worship of power. Military force achieved national success; and military force of the new German pattern meant militarism, intensive training of the whole nation in time of peace, all the best of the nation's manhood devoted to the army, and peace regarded not as the normal and continuing condition but merely as the time of preparation for war. The new discoveries in evolutionary science were called in to support the view of life as service to an aggressive state. The elimination of the unfit forms in plant and animal existence, the survival of the physically fittest in the competition of species for a place in the natural world, were made to typify the purpose and destiny of civilized man: war, survival, extinction, the right to the mighty. The Germans eagerly took up these doctrines, and their worship of military force and their success in using it compelled the other nations of the Continent to adopt the militarist way of life. France, Russia, Austria and the newly liberated kingdom of Italy all had to train great conscript armies if they would preserve their independence and speak with any authority in the European comity of nations. The weaker peoples, the Scandinavians, Dutch, Belgians, Swiss, Portuguese, who had hitherto rested their future hopes on a moral force, the civilized sense of right, had now to rely on expediency and the mutual jealousies of their great neighbours—a poor guarantee for immunity from being

swallowed up. Great Britain, behind the shield of her sea power, was less immediately threatened, but her future was none the less compromised, as the next half-century was to show.

The industrial revolution spread rapidly. Populations were generally increasing, and militarism valued the increase, of which every fit man became a soldier. Agriculture had its limits as an employment, but industry had none. It could provide for any conceivable growth of numbers. Militarism therefore looked favourably on industrialization. It not only yielded larger armies, but also their equipment and the money to pay for it. Germany became heavily industrialized after 1870, Austria, Italy and Russia to a considerable extent, and France to a much smaller one, for her population alone was not appreciably rising.

As with Great Britain, the key to rapid industrialization was improvement of transport. The powers concerned all fostered their merchant shipping by mercantilist regulations, and they all constructed railways with a view to improving the outlets for their industries. Before 1870 railway planning had been on the British model, for the handling of goods within the boundaries of the state. In the new period the state systems were linked up to become international trunk lines, with through passenger and goods services everywhere between the Pyrenees and the borders of Russia. Those were the limits within which prevailed the standard gauge first established by George Stephenson for the British railways. Spain and Russia had committed themselves to a different gauge before the importance of uniformity was recognized. The new trunk lines greatly favoured the German and Austrian industries. Those countries had the central position in Europe, but faulty communications had hitherto neutralized the advantage. Transport of goods between northern Europe and the Mediterranean had been by sea and largely in British shipping. The piercing of the Alps by railway tunnels yielded through traffic between Germany and Italy, and the completion of the great trunk line through Austria-Hungary and the Balkan countries enabled trains to run from Berlin to Constantinople. Central European communications improved likewise in the east-and-west directions. In constructing the railways military strategy was not forgotten. If they served to build up industrial

wealth, they would serve also to bring the armies to the frontier from which carefully planned invasion would be launched.

Railways in other continents helped to increase the ramifications of trade. Russia was beginning her trans-Siberian system. India had a well-developed series of trunk lines planned by Dalhousie and constructed after the Mutiny. China was yet backward in railway construction, and still suffered dreadfully from the famines that India was beginning to overcome by improved internal transport. Australia's railways served among other interests the ever-growing wool trade. African railways were yet local, although by the last decade of the century South Africa was to have long inter-state trunk lines. North American railways had a great effect on the British economy. After the United States had concluded its Civil War in 1865 the period of trans-continental trunk lines began. These railways carried population to the West and returned products in bulk to the eastern ports. The vast farming country thus opened up poured grain, chilled beef and live cattle into Europe. In Canada the same thing happened with the construction of the Canadian Pacific across the prairies in the late 'seventies. It opened a new emigration goal and a new wheat-producing area for the nourishment of industrial Britain. South of the equator, British capital constructed the railway network of Argentina and opened up another food-producing country.

The new militarist industrialism produced a new imperialism which showed interest partly in prospective settlement colonies and yet more in tropical areas which could be developed into suppliers of raw material and receivers of manufactures. The chief scenes of a new international competition were Africa, eastern Asia and the islands of the Pacific, but above all, Africa. The European countries concerned were France, Germany, Italy, Russia and Great Britain. The United States was occupied in peopling and developing the vast territories which war, purchase and treaty had brought under its flag in advance of the actual need for expansion.

France had not lost her spirit and virility by the defeat of 1870. Under the Third Republic, which succeeded the Second Empire, she developed a strong imperialism. In the Far East the French created the large dependency of Indo-China on the basis of smaller

interests already established. In Africa they were chiefly concerned with the north and north-west, from the Mediterranean to the equator. In Egypt they had long-standing connections which produced conflict with British interests and a period of jealousy and tension. The great bulge of north-west Africa, from Algeria south to the Niger basin and the Guinea coast, became predominantly a French empire after 1870. The motives were partly mercantile, and trade regulation severely discouraged foreigners. But still stronger was the spiritual need of a defeated nation to achieve something, to recover self-respect and assert itself on an equality with others. The African empire was an affair of explorers, soldiers and administrators, and their achievements were backed by the pride of the people at home. French population was stationary, that is, declining rapidly in comparison with the multiplying Germans. The African empire was a training-ground for French soldiers and a recruiting area for a black army which could be brought quickly across the Mediterranean to the defence of France.

German imperialism in Europe was early and obvious, the first cause of the changes now under discussion. Across the seas, it was late, suddenly decided on, and probably the radical cause of the subsequent woes which Germany brought on the civilized world and herself. Bismarck and the men of 1870 had no thought of colonies. For them the German ambition was to give law to continental Europe. But industrialism overcame the reluctance to look overseas. Industrial Germany needed raw materials and tropical markets. She was obtaining them under foreign flags, chiefly in the free-trading British Empire. How long would she be allowed to do so? The rate of industrialization was not keeping pace with the growth of population. Every year many thousands of Germans were emigrating to America and being lost to the fatherland. Ought they not to be settled under the German flag? The clamours of the colonial party overcame Bismarck, whose conversion probably took place some time before he announced it. At least, the decision and rapidity with which German annexations were carried out in Africa and the Pacific within the space of twelve months suggests considerable premeditation. At the opening of 1884 the Germans owned nothing outside Europe; at its close they had three sub-

stantial dependencies and were shortly to acquire more. Much followed from this: colonies as a basis of mercantile power; a navy to defend these interests; jealousy of British naval power; the characteristic German determination to be first applied to naval competition; the consequent alarm of Great Britain, hitherto not a competitor with Germany in the military sphere. In the thirty years from 1884 to 1914 these tensions never ceased to grow more acute.

Italian population was growing and industrialism developing, although at a less intense rate than in Germany. Here also there followed a colonial development. Forestalled by the French in Tunis, where there was a considerable Italian population, Italy turned to the Red Sea, on whose coasts there were derelict and unclaimed areas. The Italians occupied two of them, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland; and these, until 1911, constituted the Italian colonial empire. It existed, of course, at the mercy of the power which controlled Egypt and the Suez Canal. In 1896 Italy suffered military disaster in an attempt to conquer Abyssinia, and in 1911 she seized Tripoli and Cyrenaica from the Turks.

Stanley and other explorers revealed the great Congo basin in the 'seventies. By the new mercantilist standards it was obviously an enormously rich and desirable area. Its geography, providing it with a single outlet by the lower Congo, rendered it indivisible, yet no one great power could hope to monopolize it with the acquiescence of the others. Mainly to discuss this question Bismarck invited an international conference to meet at Berlin in the winter of 1884-5. The result was the creation of the Congo Free State, to be managed under international guarantee for the good of its inhabitants and of the civilized world. Leopold II, King of the Belgians, was appointed to rule it as the trustee of civilization. The declared intentions were excellent, but Leopold yielded to the temptation of the times. He gave monopolistic privileges to companies which exploited the natives with horrible cruelty, and the great powers which had put him in control neglected to supervise his doings. The story of "red rubber" is the most dreadful that the declining civilization of the nineteenth century has to show. The mid-twentieth can beat its atrocities in scale but hardly in quality.

The period from 1884 to 1891 witnessed the parcelling-up of

Africa among the great powers, Great Britain and France having long-standing interests, while Germany and Italy were newcomers to colonization. Italy did succeed in settling true colonists in Eritrea, but for German emigration the African possessions were a disappointment. It proved impossible to settle a white population in her tropical areas, and the fact that such a hope had been entertained shows how much the Germans had to learn.

The new imperialism spread to the islands of the Pacific, where valuable trade goods were produced. The British and French were already established in some of them, having been the active explorers of the eighteenth century. After 1870 a series of annexations rapidly accounted for the rest. Germany, much to the alarm of the Australian colonies, established herself in New Guinea and the Solomons.

Full of zest from the partition of Africa, it looked as though the great powers would attempt that of China in the last decade of the nineteenth century. It is symptomatic of the outlook of the time that a great country with an ancient culture, an outstanding record in art, philosophy and literature, and a strong national cohesion in its huge population, should have been regarded like savage Africa as an area for allotment among the western powers. That, however, was undoubtedly contemplated. The imperial government of China had become corrupt and incompetent, and power politics simply saw the fact as an opportunity. Russia, Japan and the United States were concerned in the matter in addition to Great Britain, France and Germany. Neither the British nor the Americans wished China to be broken up, but the others were quite ready for the project. Their mutual jealousies alone preserved their intended victim until Chinese reformers were able to begin the uphill fight for the regeneration of their country.

The world-trend above described was neither to the taste nor to the advantage of the British people. They were set against the militarism which demanded general compulsory service, and were determined to continue with their small voluntary army. Their Navy was still stronger than all others, and the Channel looked hard to cross. Yet the risks were increasing. Railways could now concentrate armies swiftly, and swiftness was practically secrecy. Steam shipping was capable of quick and punctually timed move-

ments, such as sailing-fleets could not contemplate. Invention, in engines, armour and guns, was making rapid improvements that outclassed every existing ship within a few years of her launching. The contrast with earlier static conditions of armament may be seen when it is recalled that the *Victory* was forty years old when she led Nelson's line at Trafalgar, and no one then thought the circumstance remarkable. Armour and improved guns came in after the Crimean War, and with them the possibility of a naval surprise from the France of Napoleon III.<sup>6</sup> This had led to a scare in 1859–60, the fortification of Portsmouth, and the rebuilding of the whole fleet in the following decade. The swift victories of the German army, and their power of secret concentration for an incredibly sudden punch, added a new possibility; and after 1870 the surprise invasion, perhaps German, perhaps French, was a background worry of the new age.

The decision on these problems was to accept the risk, to retain the small professional Army, and to trust the Navy as in the past. Continental example showed that the liberal way of life died in the presence of a great army. English history showed that it could be fostered by a great navy. But it was necessary to look to both arms. Responsible government in the colonies, curiously enough, made it possible to modernize the Army. Self-governing communities naturally undertook their own defence against local enemies, and raised their own forces for the purpose. The regular Army could thus be called home from Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and to some extent from South Africa, while quickened sea transit rendered it unnecessary to maintain numerous isolated garrisons in small possessions all over the world. This left India the Army's principal imperial commitment and allowed for the first time the concentration of the bulk of its units in the British Isles. Reorganization and modern training thus became possible. They were carried out by Edward Cardwell, Gladstone's Secretary for War, in 1868–74, and by soldiers of a new progressive type such as Lord Wolseley. Cardwell's reforms included promotion of officers by merit and the abolition of the purchase of commissioned rank; the creation of a reserve by keeping the soldier not more than seven years with the colours; and the solution of the Indian problem

by pairing or "linking" the infantry battalions so that if one was in India the other should be at home training recruits and despatching drafts. Wolseley's work was seen in the efficient conduct of small expeditions in the field, notably in Egypt in 1882, when he clearly finished off a job that the French had shirked, and proved even to the bloated militarists of the continent that British soldiership was not to be despised.

But the Army, with the Volunteers reconstituted during the French scare in 1859, could not be expected to stop a full-scale invasion by the forces that now stood threatening in Europe. For that the Navy had to be trusted. In the 'sixties the old wooden three-decked battleships, not different in principle from Nelson's, disappeared. In their place were built iron ships with armoured sides, and heavier but fewer guns generally on one fighting deck. These ships were fully rigged sailing-ships provided also with engines and screw-propellers. Engine efficiency and coal capacity were then insufficient for more than a few days' steaming, but the ships had to be prepared to keep the sea for weeks and voyage to any part of the world. Thus the Navy's passages were performed under sail, while the function of the engines was to give speed and manoeuvring power in battle. In the 'seventies bigger guns and better engines and more coaling stations caused a further change. A few giant guns were mounted in revolving turrets, and their weight had to be kept as low as possible. The resultant type of hull was unsuitable for sailing, as the tragic loss of the *Captain* proved in 1870; and so the sail-plan was steadily eliminated until by 1880 the sail-less, all-mechanized fighting ship became standard. But no development has since then proved final. New types, weapons and tactics have been unceasingly produced, and the country whose life rests on naval defence has lived always in fear of being caught napping.

Prosperity declined with security, although in this respect there was no absolute lowering of standards, but only a threat and a slowing of advance. In the 'seventies and 'eighties the country had to realize that the conditions which had made mid-Victorian wealth had passed away, and that strain and effort and a revision of doctrine were demanded by the new age.

In the mid-'seventies agriculture, which had prospered since the repeal of the Corn Laws, was hit so mortally that no revival followed until the war of 1939. The assailants were American corn and American beef, produced at prices with which the British farmer could not compete. It was not that he was inefficient. He was much more efficient than his victorious rival. His crops were heavier and his cattle finer. But his working expenses were those of an old, settled community. The American prairie gave the Western farmer land for virtually nothing, with virgin fertility that continued for years without replenishment, and in great open expanses suitable for mechanized methods of cultivation. The Canadian prairie joined in the competition in the 'eighties, and after that the Argentine; while from 1882 refrigerator ships brought Australasian mutton through the tropics, again to be sold at prices that British production could not accept. In the ensuing fifty years half the cornland of England went out of cultivation. Farming ceased to offer a career for ambitious young men. The landowning class saw its incomes rapidly decline. The labourers, what was left of them, were not worse off, but the more active went away to other work or emigrated to Canada or the southern colonies. For all their skill they had always been ill-paid, and they suffered no loss of real wages even when they abandoned their craft and took an unskilled job in a town.

Finally, the manufacturing industry for which Great Britain had yielded up so much, suffered so much, and undergone such transformation, was threatened. Germany after 1870, with railways that carried ore to coal, developed a great steel industry and supplied markets hitherto British. Her rapidly expanding towns carried on a variety of lighter manufactures with labour on lower pay and longer hours than here. Her goods permeated the world and freely entered free-trade England where the trademark "Made in Germany" stamped on every article became a portent as the nineteenth century drew to its close. The United States followed suit, notably in steel and engineering, and British railways bought American locomotives before the century was out. In all the markets of the world British industry was challenged and had to share where it had formerly reigned supreme. A great industrial depression in the late 'seventies, lifting very slowly after many years, was the natural consequence.

For the first time in a generation wages began to fall and unemployment to rise. The urban population was saved only by the cheap food which was the measure of agriculture's distress.

## 2. *The Late-Victorian Empire*

Ideas of exploitation of colonial possessions had gone out of fashion in British thought since the downfall of mercantilism early in the nineteenth century. Humanitarianism, free trade and responsible government together implied unselfish treatment of colonies and dependencies of all sorts. The new continental imperialism therefore found no sympathetic echo in British minds at the outset, although later, in South Africa, its influence was to be apparent.

Gladstone of all men had no inclination to a thrusting or aggressive imperialism. He regarded the free colonies of white men as resembling the colonies of the Greek cities of old, extensions of the race, but not necessarily of the dominion of the mother country. If they remained in association with her they were welcome; if they chose to withdraw they might do so unhindered. But Gladstone was absorbed in Irish and domestic affairs and in practice showed very little interest in the colonies. His Colonial Secretary, Lord Granville, seemed almost to think his duty to be that of winding up the Empire. He was ready to facilitate the separation of Canada, and treated the New Zealanders unsympathetically by withdrawing the regular troops during the progress of a Maori revolt. Policy of this kind was in accord with the views of the Manchester School, so long ascendant in English thought. But the times were changing, and there was an outbreak of indignation on the government's behaviour to New Zealand.

The extreme economic view of the Empire characteristic of the Manchester School, namely, that the imperial connection was purely a matter of profit and that the profit was too negligible to warrant continuance, was characteristic of the middle-class business interests which obtained political power by the First Reform Act. Meanwhile there had been a great and mainly working-class emigration to the colonies, and cheap postage was maintaining touch between those at home and those overseas. The multiplication of personal kinships

produced a growing sense of national kinship and an inter-imperial sentiment such as had never existed in earlier times. Those who were most powerfully touched by this sentiment were in the main the new voters enfranchised by the Second Reform Act. From its enactment in 1867 we may date the addition of sentiment to interest in the national attitude towards the self-governing colonies. Disraeli noted this development, and in 1872 delivered a speech in which he accused the Gladstone government of seeking to break up the Empire. He went on to speak of closer political union with the settlement colonies, greater facilities for emigrants, and measures for common defence. Disraeli's speech has been often quoted, but the outcome showed it to be mere electioneering; for after attaining power in 1874 he attempted none of these things. His imperial interest was limited to India and the defence of its frontier, and the safeguarding of the Suez Canal.

The most important imperial work of the 'seventies and 'eighties took place in those tropical areas which were "possessions" or protectorates rather than true colonies.

In 1874 the condition of the Malay population in the peninsula adjoining Singapore was deplorable. They were subject to unceasing violence, tyranny and extortion at the hands of fighting chiefs and robber bands. The country was unimproved roadless jungle, with no trade and hardly any agriculture. Chinese immigrants worked tin mines, but the Malays profited little. Among them poverty was extreme, slavery was widespread and justice did not exist. When affairs were at their worst the British governor at Singapore was empowered to effect an improvement. He induced the chiefs of successive areas to sign treaties whereby they would act by the advice of British residents. The sovereignty remained nominally with the prince, although in effect his state became a British protectorate. The Malays voluntarily accepted this system because they were sick of their own misrule. Within a dozen years the new arrangement yielded remarkable results, justice and cessation of brigandage, education and medical care, roads and reviving agriculture, posts and telegraphs, the beginning of a railway system; civilization, in a word, in place of feudal anarchy. It was mainly financed by revenues accruing from the tin mines. The twentieth

century was to witness yet greater advance, based on the wealth derived from rubber-planting.

East Africa saw the beginning of something similar, clouded by a partial disappointment. Livingstone had devoted his last years to exposing the horrors of the Arab slave trade. One of his associates, John Kirk (afterwards knighted), was appointed British consul at Zanzibar. He worked hard to get slaving stopped, and in 1876 induced the Sultan to prohibit all slave-raiding and slave-trading. The Sultan gained nothing from this except unpopularity with the interests affected. He was therefore morally entitled to British support and gratitude. His jurisdiction extended in theory over a vast and unlimited area of the East African mainland. Kirk imbued him with Livingstone's doctrine that the primitive inhabitants could only be saved from tyrants and slavers by the opening of the country to European contacts. The Sultan was willing, and entrusted Kirk with the creation of a civilized system of government and the development of an Arab-African state under British guidance. Then in 1884-5 Germany intervened in the person of an agent named Carl Peters, who ignored the Sultan's rights, pretended that the village headmen and petty chiefs of the mainland were independent sovereigns, and induced them to make so-called treaties handing over their land to the German Colonization Society. Peters returned to Berlin with his bundle of treaties, and the German Emperor thereupon proclaimed the acquisitions a German protectorate. When the Sultan of Zanzibar protested that the country was his, he was indignantly required to evacuate German territory without delay, while a German fleet arrived at Zanzibar to bombard him if he objected. So was German East Africa founded.

The British government had not formally taken the Sultan under its protection, and it now refused to do anything for him. Gladstone, who was in power when the Germans intervened, effusively welcomed them into the ranks of the colonizing nations. Lord Salisbury, his successor, while admitting that wrong had been done, passed by on the other side, saying that Zanzibar was not a British interest.

Second thoughts, however, proved that it was, not only from the philanthropic but even from the selfish point of view. The occupation of African territory by Great Britain involved no exclusion of

the trade of other nations. Its occupation by France or Germany did; and British industry could not endure the wholesale loss of African markets and supplies which would ensue unless Great Britain took a share in the partition. A treaty was therefore made with Germany to delimit East African spheres of influence; the British East Africa Company was chartered in 1888, and a further treaty in 1890 made a final partition. The northern part of the region became British (now Kenya Colony), and Uganda in the interior became a British protectorate; while the larger southern section became German. Since Germany lost it in the war of 1914-18 it has been known under British control as Tanganyika Territory.

These transactions provide a good illustration of the new imperialism and the partition of Africa. They help to explain also why British industrial interests, once anti-imperial, were obliged to reverse their doctrine; and why the humanitarians, who had once deprecated British annexation of native territories, now favoured it to save the inhabitants from something worse.

Disraeli in the 'seventies showed little concern for the sort of developments outlined above. His imperial policy was of much older origins and was directed to the great established realities of India and the communications with it. Russian actions were causing anxiety in two directions: first, the extension of Russian rule in central Asia, towards the borders of Afghanistan and north-western India; and second, the Russian attack on European Turkey in 1877-8 and the advance of victorious Russian armies to the outskirts of Constantinople. The Russo-Turkish war arose from the failure of Turkish rule over the subject populations and its degeneration into massacre in 1877 (the "Bulgarian atrocities"). Russia intervened on behalf of the victims, and proposed by the terms of San Stefano to establish a liberated Bulgaria stretching to the Mediterranean and encircling Constantinople on its western side. So far was good, for the Turks had undoubtedly asked for it, in the sense that their conduct had been atrocious. But Disraeli feared that the big Bulgaria would only be a mask for its Russian liberator, and that Russia would in effect control the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. That meant that a Russian sea power might be matured in security within the Black Sea and then be in position to attack the main artery of

the British Empire passing through the Mediterranean and the Canal to India. Palmerston had countered the same threat in pre-Canal days when merely overland connections with India had been at stake. In Disraeli's time the affair was more serious. He objected firmly to the San Stefano terms, maintained his point in spite of war alarms and Gladstonian denunciation, and at the Congress of Berlin (1878) secured the limitation of the new Bulgaria and the restoration of Turkish control of the Mediterranean shores west of Constantinople. The settlement endured in substance for thirty-four years.

On the question of the Indian frontier Disraeli was less fortunate. There was a forward party in British India who wished to seek security by gaining control of Afghanistan as an outwork against Russia. Disraeli on the whole agreed with them and appointed Lord Lytton as Viceroy to work to that end. The Amir had been displaying Russian sympathies. On his refusal to receive a British mission, forces from India invaded his country, expelled him, and placed a British nominee on the throne. As in 1839 the outcome was failure. To maintain the settlement it was necessary for British troops to remain in Afghanistan. For two years they did so amid increasing disorder and hostilities to which no end was in sight. Finally, after Disraeli's fall in 1880, Gladstone called off the adventure and left Afghanistan to its independence. Both sides had learnt a lesson, and the Afghans for their part excluded Russian influence thenceforward as rigidly as British.

For a century Egypt had been important as a stepping-stone to India, and after 1869 the Canal redoubled that importance. Ismail, the Khedive of Egypt, a friend of Napoleon III, had sought to imitate the imperial splendour by a policy of public works, expansion by conquest to the equator, and vast expenditure. But Egypt was too poor a country to support such ambition. The peasantry were overtaxed and plundered and slave-driven by corrupt officials, while Ismail replenished his treasury with heavy loans raised from French and British investors on the strength of the Westernized facade with which he was camouflaging Egyptian misery. It could not last, and in 1875 he was near bankruptcy. He had to sell his holding of Suez Canal shares. Disraeli adroitly bought them for

the British government, thus acquiring for it a controlling voice in the waterway in which four-fifths of the shipping was British.

Ismail's bankruptcy was only postponed. In the following year he defaulted. Great financiers were hit, and some have said that they shared the guilt of the unsound transactions; but many thousands of small investors were defrauded, and the chief culprit deserves no sympathy. Great Britain and France established the Dual Control to enforce economy and save something for the creditors, and Ismail was deposed in favour of his son Tewfik. Egyptian officials resented the economies, and the people in general thought it unfair that they should be held liable for the Egyptian debt. In 1882 Arabi Pasha raised an anti-foreign revolt with the cry of "Egypt for the Egyptians". The Egyptian army supported him, and it seemed possible that coercion would be a long process. France, under the menace of the German army, lost her nerve and backed out. Great Britain landed an expeditionary force after the fleet had bombarded Alexandria, and in a brief campaign Wolseley overthrew Arabi. Order was restored under British direction, with Lord Cromer as British Agent and Consul-General. Under this modest style he held office for a quarter of a century as the power behind the Khedive's throne. Hampered by French jealousy and German intrigue, he carried out a regeneration such as was then proceeding in Malaya, and as Kirk would have effected in East Africa. Modern Egypt owes him much.

The Sudan as far south as the borders of Uganda had been occupied by Ismail's disorderly troops and slave-hunting officials. In 1881 a revolt broke out under the Mahdi, whose object was to expel the Egyptians and become the master of the Sudan. The fighting tribesmen of preponderant Arab blood followed him, but the Hamitic majority simply cowered under a change of tyrants. Gladstone misunderstood this, and spoke of the Mahdists as "a people rightly struggling to be free". General Gordon, who had been in the Sudan in Ismail's service, did not misunderstand it. He was sent out to bring away the remaining Egyptian troops and evacuate the Sudan. Instead of doing so, he stood a siege at Khartum and called on the British government to "smash the Mahdi". An expedition was needed to extricate him, and Gladstone was very loath

to send it. Public opinion and his own colleagues at length compelled him, but it was too late. The column arrived two days after the Mahdi had stormed Khartum, and Gordon was dead. Gordon was an ardent Christian of Livingstone's type, a philanthropist, and unflinchingly honest and courageous. His personality fired the British imagination. When, fourteen years later, Lord Kitchener reconquered the Sudan, Gordon's spirit inspired the administration which in a short time restored justice, industry and hope to a despairing population. The record of Mahdism is best summed up by the trend of that population. In 1898, when Khartum was retaken, the inhabitants of the Sudan were estimated to be one quarter of the numbers that had occupied the country under the by no means beneficent rule of the Egyptians.

On the West African coast there were long-established British holdings in the Gambia, Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast. The great post-1870 French expansion occupied the interior behind these possessions and set limits to their development. Broadly speaking the position had been stabilized by the end of the nineteenth century. After the British slave trade had been made illegal in 1807, British policy had clung to these African stations in order to make them bases of operation against further slaving. In spite of fair promises from the other maritime powers a great deal of slaving went on until the decade 1860-70, when the emancipation of American, French and Spanish slaves in the transatlantic plantations at length closed the markets for new captives. During all that time the British humanitarians worked to get the whole business stopped. One of their principles was to promote the commodity trade in order to give the coastal chiefs a chance to profit from goods rather than human beings.

That part of Nigeria which now includes Lagos had a like origin, for the British took it over in 1861 purely for anti-slaving purposes. But the Niger basin, the main part of Nigeria, has a different history. The channels of its delta, where the native chiefs sold palm-oil to Europeans, had long been known as the Oil Rivers. The interior was unpenetrated, and these waterways were regarded not as a delta but as separate rivers. Not until 1830 were they positively identified with the outfall of the Niger. In spite of the deadly

climate European traders, chiefly British and French, increased their business, for palm-oil was one of the raw materials that modern industry demanded in unlimited quantity. There was a mercantile duel between the British and French, and Sir George Goldie, a man of vision and leadership, decided the issue. He consolidated the British traders into one organization, afterwards chartered in 1886 as the Royal Niger Company. It had then been some years in operation and had so ousted the French from the lower Niger that when, in 1884-5, the great powers were claiming their sphères of influence in the general partition, the British right was recognized, while the French took the upper Niger. The Royal Niger Company rapidly established the outline of a great dependency. But it had not the resources of a government, and was able neither to improve the condition of the native population (which badly needed it) nor to cope with the strong military powers that held the interior. In 1900, therefore, the Company surrendered its jurisdiction to the Crown, and a new era, the Lugard era, began. Its story belongs to a later chapter.

Comparing the state of northern and tropical Africa before and after the partition by the new imperialism, it is only possible to regard the establishment of European control as fortunate for the Africans. They were everywhere subject to tyrannies, some of them very brutal and bloody; they endured without remedy horrible diseases caused by ignorance and a bad climate; they existed for the most part at the lowest standard of life, without margin to allow for common fluctuations due to pest or drought. European control did not give them political liberty, which in that generation they would not have understood, but it did confer a measure of personal liberty until then undreamed of; it began to cope with disease, thereby prolonging and sweetening life; and it aided that end by enabling Africans, instead of cultivating for immediate subsistence, to produce for large-scale markets, with an immense increase of economic security. There were large exceptions—Leopold's ghastly doings in the Congo, and the crimes of the Germans in South West Africa—but on the whole post-1870 Europe in Africa can be justified. The British and French proceedings at least will bear investigation.

This chapter has not dealt with the true colonies peopled by

white men, but they also occupied a greater place in the public thought of Great Britain than they had done in the mid-Victorian era. The general interest in all aspects of the Empire was a spontaneous reaction to the conditions of the time. It was further stimulated by the speeches and writings of eminent men, but it produced them, not they it. Disraeli in his earlier years had evinced the same want of sympathy with colonial points of view as he accused his opponents of showing in 1872. He changed his mind because public opinion was changing. Sir John Seeley, a historian of Liberal sympathies, and Sir Charles Dilke, a Radical politician, published notable books on imperial questions in 1883 and 1890 respectively. These books were successful because there was a public eager to read them. In a lighter but even more popular phase the early writings of Rudyard Kipling, such as *Plain Tales from the Hills*, depicted post-Mutiny India as a land of comic snobbery and essential decency. This again was a product of the times. The outgrowth of aristocracy which had ruled India with strong individual character and entire lack of self-consciousness had given place in the latter half of the century to the standardized product of the new public schools, conscientiously taught by Thomas Arnold and his like to behave as gentlemen and to subordinate self to service. Their strength and their weakness survived undiluted till 1914.

But the late-Victorian Empire was the affair of all classes. It grew in the popular regard much more during Gladstone's supposedly lukewarm administration of 1880-85 than it had done earlier as a plank in Disraeli's platform. The whole British people was enraged at Gladstone's tardiness in rescuing Gordon. Again in 1893, when Gladstone considered evacuating Uganda, his Scottish agent told him that he would have to evacuate Downing Street also. And in 1898, when a French force at Fashoda challenged the British deliverance of the Sudan, public opinion solidly supported the government in demanding that France must withdraw. In Palmerston's day the public will had been similarly harnessed to other than colonial interests. For good and ill the values had altered.

3. *The Dissolution of the Nineteenth Century:*  
*Gladstone and Disraeli*

Pure Liberalism (with a capital L) had a relatively brief career. As long as Palmerston lived, it was a junior partner to the Whigs. Gladstone made it dominant, and it came to its full development in his ministry of 1868-74. So far as Great Britain was concerned it almost fulfilled its constructive mission in that one ministry; for, to tell the truth, the nineteenth century had done most of its liberal work before the Liberal party was heard of. But Gladstone embraced Ireland in his Liberal programme; and Ireland, what with Land Acts and Home Rule, absorbed Liberal energy and weakened the Liberal party until its eclipse, almost coincident with the demise of its Grand Old Man, occurred at the close of the century. Those who in the next century called themselves Liberals would not have been recognized as such by the Gladstonians. That is a pity, for the Englishman's life has been steadily de-liberalized in the past fifty years and has had need of the Liberal guardian whose watchword was liberty. Had he survived, we should not now be in an advanced stage of bureaucratic enchainment.

Gladstone's great ministry completed the work of liberation by removing privilege and restriction. In Ireland he disestablished the Protestant church which had for centuries been collecting tithes from a mainly Catholic population; and attempted by his first Land Act to prevent agricultural tenants from being arbitrarily turned out without compensation for the improvements they had made in their holdings. In Great Britain his blows at privilege included the throwing open of the civil service to entry by competitive examination, the abolition of religious tests which had made Oxford and Cambridge preserves of the Church of England, and the abolition of purchase in the Army. In a sense the Ballot Act of 1872 may be placed in the same category for, by abolishing open voting, it cut away the opportunities for bribery and intimidation at elections. Many people, however, in the name of sturdy independence, disapproved of the ballot. They held that anonymous voting was a sneaking practice like anonymous letter-writing. Gladstone was inclined to agree with them. The ballot in fact was of Radical

parentage, the Six Points of the Chartist. Trade unions being still, for some purposes such as the control of their own funds, illegal bodies, were relieved of this disability by an Act of 1871, but were aggrieved at the simultaneous strengthening of the law against picketing and intimidating non-strikers. Two important reforms were made in the mechanism of the state by the creation of the Local Government Board, combining the administration of the Poor Law and Public Health; and by the High Court of Judicature Act, which swept away ancient nests of legal circumlocution for the frustration of justice, and substituted a centralized Supreme Court with a uniform and sensible procedure. The Education Act of 1870 began the creation of a national education service, by providing that schools must be made available everywhere. This was a reform different in nature from the others, for it compelled the ratepayer to do something hitherto left to private initiative. But the way had long been prepared for it by the subsidizing and inspection of the schools provided by the Church and the non-conformists. Finally, the Licensing Act of 1872 stood in a category almost of its own. It was restrictive and a curtailment of liberty, the liberty of the people to injure itself by excessive drinking. The Act was generally unpopular and the major cause of Gladstone's defeat in the election of 1874. It was inspired by a small minority which with intemperate speech carried on an agitation for temperance in drinking. By temperance most of its members meant total abstinence.

Disraeli came in with the only clear majority and for the only, long ministry of his career. He had a genuine sense of social ills and believed that the state should undertake responsibilities that experience showed the private citizen to be unable to cope with. Here he and his Conservatives were closer to Radical Socialism than many of them imagined, and than the pure Liberals could ever be. The line between Radical and Conservative has in fact often been crossed. In earlier days Cobbett had been both. It was not for nothing that Disraeli had begun his political career as a Radical. In these very 1870's there was a Radical and reforming Mayor of Birmingham, Joseph Chamberlain, who was destined to be a leading force in the Conservative party of the future. And when in the next

century the Liberals ceased to be such and became Radical Socialists, their dynamic leader Mr. Lloyd George became the prime minister of victory in the first great war with Germany, loyally supported by Conservatives no less than by his own party. In the domestic politics of the country the distinction between the Socialist and the Conservative is smaller than is often supposed—a fact which has not been good for liberty—; and the vituperation often passing between them has arisen more from differences of fortune than of principle. When the “arrived” Socialist leader lives in the style of the prospering bourgeois and sends his sons to a public school the economic difference itself is seen to have worn thin.

While, therefore, the Liberal reforms had promoted free equality, those of Disraeli improved the material state of society by compelling individuals to surrender their freedom to make profit from bad conditions and by compelling all payers of rates and taxes to bear the cost of benefits for a limited number. This was to be the process of nearly all reform thenceforward to the present day. Disraeli's social reforms included the Artisans' Dwellings Act, whereby local authorities were to buy slum properties for destruction and re-building; a very important Public Health Act improving or creating services for supplying water, removing sewage and rubbish, and isolating infectious diseases; a Food and Drugs Act for preventing adulteration; a compulsion of all local authorities to appoint Medical Officers of Health; and a compulsion of parents to send their children to the schools established since 1870. Disraeli, or more directly his Home Secretary, Richard Cross, also gave greatly increased powers of strike action to the trade unions, and overhauled and codified the Factory Acts which now stretched back in a long series over forty years. Samuel Plimsoll's achievement of safety regulations for the preservation of sailors' lives at sea was a private man's reform, but it was in tune with the trend of thought in this Parliament.

Age and physical weakness compelled Disraeli to retire to the Lords with the title of Earl of Beaconsfield in 1876. At the same time foreign and imperial affairs pushed social reform into the background. The Bulgarian atrocities, followed by the Russo-Turkish War and the crisis of 1878 between Great Britain and Russia, have

already been dealt with.<sup>1</sup> Disraeli's success at the Berlin Congress and his declaration that he brought back "peace with honour" appeared to increase his popularity. But Gladstone in a moral fury had been denouncing any support of the murderous Turk, and although he failed to carry his point at the time a vast number of people heeded his words. Two years later they bore fruit in a general election.

In the Empire the affairs of South Africa grew disturbing. The opening of the Suez Canal had removed the Cape from its position on the road to India. Almost at once a compensation had appeared in the discovery of the rich diamond field of Kimberley. The mines attracted a new sort of man, the man of financial ability, large vision and big dealings, and enabled his type to become a predominant influence in South Africa. But in the 'seventies this was not yet apparent. Cecil Rhodes and his like were making their fortunes, not yet using them as political levers; and the problems of a simpler time held the field. The main problem was, what was to become of the Transvaal, the larger of the two republics founded by the trekkers of 1836? It was huge in area and very sparsely occupied by the Boers (area and numbers were as if the whole of France had been peopled by no more than the population of Brighton). They had within their own borders a large native population whom they could hardly keep down, and they were threatened from without by the military power of the Zulus, the most formidable warriors in Africa. And at a critical moment they had exactly twelve shillings in the state treasury. It was generally thought that if the Zulus invaded the Transvaal the Boers could not stop them, and that a Zulu victory would be the signal for a general rising of all the Bantu tribes, who outnumbered the Europeans of South Africa by at least ten to one.

In 1877 Lord Carnarvon, Disraeli's Colonial Secretary, annexed the Transvaal in order to provide for its defence. He persuaded himself that the Boers desired the step. In fact they were bitterly resentful, but they were in no position to resist. Then the Zulus were tackled. This was done by Sir Bartle Frere, the governor of the Cape, acting in excess of his instructions. He ordered the Zulus to disarm, and

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 134-5.

they chose to fight. The Zulu War occupied the first six months of 1879. It began with a major disaster and ended in success only at a much greater cost than had been allowed for. Disraeli himself, absorbed in Russian and Indian questions, had not sought this adventure. In the whole South African business his hand was forced by subordinates whom he did not keep under control. Gladstone denounced everything, including the Transvaal annexation. The Boers took him to mean that he would reverse it when he came into power.

The Disraeli ministry, so brilliant-looking in the "peace with honour" days of 1878, was in the shadows by 1880. The Zulu War had cost many lives and millions, the Afghan War was still going on. These outpost affairs had strained the Army to the utmost; and men reflected on the risk of fighting Russia that Disraeli had also run. What would have been the outcome of that? The background of these risks was the agricultural depression and the industrial depression. Neither was Disraeli's fault, but both had set in since he came to power. "Peace, retrenchment and reform!" shouted the Liberals, and the country voted them in. Gladstone again took office, and Disraeli died next year.

At the close of his first great ministry Gladstone, feeling that the work of Liberal reform was accomplished, had determined to retire from the leadership of the party. Disraelian imperialism and the Bulgarian atrocities brought him back. His campaign of oratory in the 1880 election devastated the Conservative position, and he resumed office on as high a level of prestige as he had ever occupied. Yet it might have been better for his personal fame—for which he cared little—if he had retired, for the great electoral victory preluded a disappointing and even disastrous ministry.

The times were changing. Liberal Europe was becoming militarist Europe, and personal liberty was on the decline. In Germany even learned professors were finding that certain teachings in history, philosophy and biology were gratefully noted by the state, and the stimulus had its effect. In practical politics as they concerned England the continent was becoming universally protectionist, impeding entry of British manufactures by tariffs and dumping goods of its own at prices with which the British could not compete.

Before 1870 there had been a prospect of universal free trade, or so optimists had thought; but now there was none. The industrial depression was deepening, and men whose wages were falling and whose jobs were leaving them were in the mood to be tempted by reforming projects such as Gladstone could not sponsor; though there were others who could. The agricultural depression continued, and was certain to, so long as the virgin lands of the West could pump grain into steamers' holds at prices which spelt bankruptcy to farming England. In Ireland also America hit the producers. The Irish tenant could not make his rent out of the current corn, cattle and bacon prices, and the 1880's were to witness a demand for adjustment embodied in cruel outrages such as even Ireland could hardly remember from the past.

In England the calm certainty of the 'sixties that stable security had been reached, or would be after a few final reforms, had broken down, not only in the material but in moral aspects. Religion played a part difficult to realize now in the life of the Victorian Englishman. He had arrived through stormy centuries at a broad, tolerant Protestantism, so sure of itself that it felt no need to persecute dissidents, just as its exponents had been so sure of their manufacturing supremacy that they had felt no need to charge tariffs to foreign competitors. The religious security was now threatened together with the economic. The Oxford Movement to revitalize Church doctrine and practice had become the Anglo-Catholic movement, wherein ritualist priests used ceremonies and vestments hitherto characteristic of the Roman Catholics, and openly repudiated the application of the term Protestant to themselves and the Church of England. But a greater challenge than this lay in the new learning of geology, archaeology and biology, which showed that the world was infinitely older, mankind infinitely older, and all forms of life evolved by a quite other process, than was recorded in the biblical story of creation and the hitherto accepted chronology associated with it. The clergy were at first inclined to deny the validity of the new science, but afterwards, finding that position untenable, turned to reconciling it with Christian doctrine. This involved the admission that parts of the Bible, hitherto accepted as literally true, were not so, and a corresponding weakening of the

whole religious position. The majority of the Christian laity of the existing generation maintained their full faith and disregarded the awkward questions that were arising. But the coming generation of the twentieth century were to grow up largely non-Christian in the sense in which all men would have applied that word in the 'sixties, and the transition period fell in the 'eighties and 'nineties. Probably the greatest single event in this series was the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859, a book as momentous for the nineteenth century as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* for the eighteenth.

Gladstone, then, came in again in a disgruntled world. His victory was at once thrown wholly out of perspective by an envenomed quarrel between the Commons as a whole and Charles Bradlaugh the atheist, who had been elected by a Radical constituency and claimed to take his seat without taking the customary oath. The affair, owing to the background circumstances above indicated, aroused disproportionate passion and dragged on for years, diverting the attention of ministers and members from the proper work of government. A new Home Rule party, led by Charles Stewart Parnell, had been formed in Ireland, its members returned by peasant voters secured by the ballot of 1872 from the disapproval of their landlords. Gladstone did not yet think that the Union should be undone by the revival of a separate Irish Parliament, but he did admit that the grievances of the Irish peasant were not redressed. His Land Act of 1881 was meant to be a final solution. It recognized that the tenant as well as the landlord had some property in the holding and provided courts for the fixing of rents, not thenceforward to be varied during a specified period, on terms fair to both. The continuing invasion of prairie produce prevented any fixed rent from remaining fair, and the Act of 1881 foundered on steadily falling prices. It left Ireland, which felt the pinch, and England, which did not understand why a good intention was ill received, more exasperated than before.

Celtic Ireland formed a Land League, boycotted and murdered landlords, drove off the cattle of those who offended the League, murdered Lord Frederick Cavendish, the Chief Secretary, in Phoenix Park, and murdered peasants who took prohibited holdings

or paid prohibited rents. Black terror brooded over the Irish land, slayers lurked behind hedges or fired through windows, a whole village might know the truth yet not a witness dared to speak. Gladstone, whose soul was bent on righting the wrongs of Ireland, found himself ruling there by martial law and imprisoning men whom he could not bring to trial. Was this government of Ireland after all a task for Englishmen? The doubt grew.

South Africa demanded attention, which Gladstone did not give. The months passed while he did not redeem his half-promise of independence for the Transvaal, or even the Conservative promise of responsible government made at the annexation. The humanitarian element, strong in the Liberal party, was the obstacle. The last Boer president had committed some shocking atrocities against rebellious natives, or rather, had hired a German officer who committed them. The humanitarians wanted safeguards, and the whole thing, amid the preoccupations of Ireland and Bradlaugh, had been put off. The Boers rose under the leadership of Paul Kruger. Early in 1881 they defeated Sir George Colley at Majuba Hill, and captured the microscopic garrisons which had been left to maintain British authority in the Transvaal. Gladstone could have reconquered the country, but he believed it ought to be free, and he was not the man to fight in a bad cause. He made peace on the morrow of the Majuba defeat and left the world and the Boers to suppose that England was a bully only needing a shrewd punch to be brought to reason. The peace conceded virtual independence—too late; for it should have been done before the outbreak.

Egypt and the Sudan: Arabi's revolt, the bombardment of Alexandria, Wolseley's expedition, Gordon's death, all these were blows to a ministry that desired no imperial policies and thought only of domestic affairs. Each step led to the next, and the ministry of peace and retrenchment made war and spent money. Its own supporters were dissatisfied. John Bright resigned because the fleet fired on Alexandria, while Lord Hartington threatened resignation unless an army were sent to rescue Gordon. Meanwhile imperialism grew among the Conservatives and a section of the Liberals, and imperialists cried out on Gladstone for letting the Empire go to ruin. The Empire was embarrassment enough to a premier who did not

passionately care whether it existed or not. Egypt embroiled him with the French, who repented their weakness and blamed England because they had shown it. Half a dozen questions in Africa and the Pacific threatened embroilment with Germany, which was avoided by giving way to her on all points. The desertion of a friend in East Africa has been mentioned, while the recognition of a German seizure of northern New Guinea excited the Australians to anger. Even Russia, the justified of 1878, gave offence by a flagrant seizure, on the Afghan frontier; but here Gladstone was firm and the encroachment was stopped. It was "the Penjeh incident" of 1885, and for a moment war was in sight. Perhaps Disraeli smiled in his tomb.

One first-class reform, however, this ministry did make, the widening of the franchise by the Third Reform Act of 1884. The Act left the borough franchise untouched, but made its conditions apply to the counties also. This abolished the distinction between town and county constituencies, which was as old as Parliament and had originally produced two distinct classes of members, the mercantile burgesses and the land-owning knights of the shire. Democracy in the nineteenth-century sense was completed, that is, all male heads of households, however poor, were enfranchised. The new voters were mainly agricultural labourers, very few of whom had qualified under the £12 county franchise of 1867.

The Irish turmoil continued, the depression in trade and employment was unrelieved, the Radical Joseph Chamberlain preached remedies which Liberals could not stomach, and the Gordon affair, which brought public censure from the Queen, sent the ministry staggering to its fall. It resigned in the summer of 1885. Lord Salisbury and the Conservatives took office until a general election could be held at the end of the year.

The election placed both parties at the mercy of Parnell and his Irish nationalists. The old voters, that is, those of the boroughs, turned against Gladstone; but the newly enfranchised countrymen voted for him, or perhaps for a highly Radical reforming programme that Chamberlain put forward without his chief's sanction. Anyhow, the result was an Irish victory. Parnell and his eighty-six could make government impossible by either the Liberals or the Con-

servatives, neither of whom had an independent majority. There had been some negotiations between Parnell and the Conservatives and a possibility that Lord Salisbury might agree to a measure of Home Rule. But Parnell was also negotiating with the Liberals, and it was not to Salisbury's taste to be seen bidding for a block of Irish votes in the Commons. He dropped the idea. First, however, he had passed the Land Purchase Act of 1885, the first of a series of Conservative measures which, as will be shown, solved the Irish question so far as it was social and economic, although they left the political grievance untouched. When Parliament met early in 1886 Salisbury resigned and Gladstone took office with a majority dependent on the adhesion of the Irish.

#### *4. The Dissolution of the Nineteenth Century: Home Rule and South African Imperialism*

Before these circumstances arose Gladstone had become converted to the view that Home Rule must be conceded to Ireland. He foresaw that it would be difficult to pass through Parliament and might be costly to the party that undertook it. He had kept his conviction to himself, hoping that the Conservatives would relieve him of the responsibility of acting on it. They did not. Peel had broken his party on the Corn Laws forty years before. Salisbury preferred not to repeat the performance. Gladstone publicly announced his conversion, the Nationalists supported him, and he brought in the Home Rule Bill of 1886.

It may be well to explain why both party leaders were reluctant to support Home Rule, and why, in that case, either of them did. First, the case for Home Rule, stated by itself, was convincing to any responsible man: the natural right of a people to self-government, the failure of British government to yield contentment to Ireland or even to ensure peace and justice, the strong demand of four-fifths of the Irish members, the nuisance of Irish obstruction in the ordinary work of Parliament, the weakening of British governments in face of the world by the perpetual Irish agitation, and now the threatened paralysis of the constitution by the Irish group holding the balance between parties. These things decided

Gladstone and had not been without their effect on Salisbury. Yet the deterrents were very strong: the fanaticism and violence of the Celtic people, the murderous cruelties which were their form of political expression, their manifest unfitness to exercise constitutional rule, and the existence of a substantial minority who preferred the United Kingdom and who would undoubtedly suffer persecution under Home Rule. The minority were not Englishmen who could leave Ireland and come home, but Irishmen whose home Ireland was. To every decent man who could think beyond principles and realize the details that they involved, it seemed black treachery and desertion to leave these Irish loyalists to their fate. As with the Home Rulers, there were also reasons of expediency, chief of which was the influence of the Irish landlords and the wealth they represented. Indeed, the men of that time would not have labelled it expediency. The sanctity of property was for them a living principle. When Gladstone decided for Home Rule all his supporters had to make their personal decision.

A sufficient number of them decided against it to wreck the bill in the House of Commons. The Liberal test of liberty and justice could not give an unquestioned answer, for justice to one side in Ireland meant injustice to the other. Lord Hartington (afterwards Duke of Devonshire), a Liberal of Whig origins, refused to follow Gladstone, so did Chamberlain the Radical, and John Bright the Quaker, who supported liberty wherever he saw it. About 90 Liberals combined with the Conservatives to throw out the bill. Gladstone dissolved Parliament, and the general election of 1886 returned a substantial majority against Home Rule. Lord Salisbury took office at the head of the Unionists, a new party name representing the Conservatives with the Liberal addition. His ministry ran the full six years which was customary with a clear majority. Gladstone therefore had split the Liberals as Peel had split the Conservatives, and unlike Peel he had not achieved the object for which he did it.

The Unionists had their own policy for Ireland. In large principle it was land purchase, carried out by successive Acts of widening scope, culminating in the great measure of 1903; while in detail it was the tackling of abuses wherever found and the improvement

of administration to cope with them. Land purchase meant the buying out of the landlords by means of money advanced by government to the tenants, who thus became peasant proprietors. Their obligation was to repay the money at a low rate of interest spread over a long term of years. The money in fact never was wholly repaid, and the British taxpayer, to the extent of the default, bought the land from the Irish landlords and presented it to the Irish peasants. The social and economic effects were enormous. Ten years after 1836 the condition of Ireland was vastly improved. Twenty years after, it was transformed. A secure, prosperous society of small landowners had succeeded the starving wretches who had once been evicted at will and had committed crimes of terror against their oppressors. But the political grief was not assuaged. The Irish majority was more than ever determined on Home Rule.

Ireland remained a leading feature in British politics which most people would rather have done without. Another and a more congenial interest was the Empire, and especially the African aspects of it, North and South. For a dozen years after Gordon's death the Sudan was left to the Mahdists while Cromer regenerated Egypt. Then Kitchener, with British and Egyptian forces, carried out the reconquest, the crucial event being the battle of Omdurman in 1898. Up the Nile at Fashoda he found a French force that had marched across Africa from the French Congo. These Frenchmen would speedily have been wiped out if the British had not won at Omdurman, but as it was their presence on the Nile threatened to deprive England and Egypt of the fruits of success; for who controls the upper Nile controls the life-stream of Egypt. After an Anglo-French crisis—the last—they were withdrawn, and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, a joint dependency, entered the civilized stage of its history.

In 1885-6 the end of old South Africa, the land of trekkers, hunters and fighting natives, the "Savage South Africa" which inspired the novels of Rider Haggard and stirred the blood of youth, was presaged by the discovery of the great goldfield of the Witwatersrand in the Transvaal. The gold was not in alluvial deposits for individual diggers, as it had been at Ballarat and was to be at Klondyke. It was in a vast mass of low-grade ore, deep in the

ground, and extractible only by large-scale mining and machinery. The Rand called for capital, science and skilled labour, and a great force of unskilled labour for the brute digging and hewing. The Rand, in fact, brought the industrial revolution, fully equipped and run by godless men, into the conservative, pious, seventeenth-century life of the Transvaal Boers. The Kimberley diamonds were in a border no-man's-land. The Rand goldfield, infinitely greater, was in the heart of the Transvaal. After fourteen years the South African War was to be the result of the intrusion.

The capital was there in the hands of Cecil Rhodes and the diamond magnates, who had consolidated a mass of small claims at Kimberley under the control of a limited ring which grew very rich. They went without hesitation into the Rand and grew richer still. Their companies were open to the home investor, they employed mining engineers, mechanics and office workers, mostly British, and they recruited the South African Kaffir for the manual work. Johannesburg, the new centre on the Rand, became a great city. Within ten years the Uitlanders, the immigrant white population, equalled in numbers the Boer inhabitants of the Transvaal. Here was an alien problem such as few states have ever faced.

Cecil Rhodes was not merely an operator in mining shares. For him that was a means to an end. His end was to open up South Africa to modern enterprise and to shape it into a great dominion of the British Empire. His health was bad, and his life did not promise to be long. He had to work quickly, and as a multi-millionaire he might take shorter cuts than a pure and poor politician. He entered the Cape Parliament in 1880, when railway construction was beginning to be thought of in terms of South Africa rather than of the short local lines hitherto operated. Rhodes made railway schemes not only South African but continental. He thought of a south-to-north line all the way from the Cape to Cairo. It was not just a case of aiming at the biggest. France had a plan for a complete west-to-east belt across Africa, north of the equator, the plan destined to be frustrated later at Fashoda. Germany thought always on ambitious lines and might one day appear as the inheritor of Portugal's African holdings. Portugal herself was not too old to harbour new schemes, and a Portuguese trans-African belt from

Angola to Mozambique was talked of. Rhodes's Cape to Cairo project would fulfil all these.

He was an imperialist of the full post-1870 type, bent upon carving up Africa for his own country's gain and the discomfiture of rivals. In political views he was rather Radical than Conservative. He supported Irish Home Rule and wanted South Africa to become a dominion with the maximum of self-government—but a British dominion nevertheless. His career had shaped him. In the contest for the survival of the fittest at Kimberley he had been engaged in big business; and South African big business, which made millionaires out of nothing in a few years, was not conducted on rules approved by the fastidious. Rhodes had no moral recoil from methods which would not have been entertained by a man with a background of official or service life and its standards of conduct.

The country north of the Transvaal appeared "ripe for development". Although within the tropics, much of it was high-lying and healthy. In parts there were gold deposits, and optimism pictured a second and richer Rand. The possessors were the Matabele, an offshoot of the Zulus, lording it over Mashonas and other subject tribes. Rhodes sent agents to Lobengula, the Matabele king, and obtained a concession to prospect, mine and settle in his country. The illiterate warrior did not realize that it meant parting with his independence, but that was inevitable and foreseen by the Rhodes party. The next step was the formation of the British South Africa Company (commonly called the Chartered Company) in 1889. The Company recruited a picked body of pioneers and sent them north in 1890. They entered Mashonaland and founded the nucleus of a colony at Salisbury. The colony is now Southern Rhodesia. It extends from the Transvaal to the Zambezi. With all speed the Company crossed the river and acquired Northern Rhodesia, stretching far up into central Africa; but this was not colonists' country and has remained a native dependency-producing metals and raw materials. In Southern Rhodesia the expected happened. The Matabele suddenly realized that they were no longer a sovereign people when the British interfered to stop their customary killing of the subject Mashonas. The Matabele War of 1893 ensued, and Lobengula died while fleeing from his conquerors. By absolute

standards he was a brutal old savage whom civilization was bound to liquidate. By his own lights he had been shabbily treated. The man who carried out the revolution was Doctor L. S. Jameson, Rhodes's lieutenant on the spot.

The British public at home, increasingly indoctrinated with the South African type of imperialism, followed these events with interest. It was exceptional for there to be such general interest in imperial business. The formation of a strong democratic opinion on matters outside the range of personal experience had its dangers. It was inevitable that few should possess the exact knowledge essential to sound judgement. The generality were at the mercy of catchwords and war-cries, and expressed their judgements nevertheless. The same phenomena, with the same not too fortunate results, were observable in the democratic view of international affairs after 1918. "A little learning" is not adequate, and democracy had not yet learned to drink deep of the Pierian spring.

By 1892 the Salisbury ministry had outlived its popularity, and the general election gave Gladstone a majority. But he was still pledged to Home Rule, and Great Britain was still against it. His majority was such only by virtue of the Irish adhesion. The ill-feeling over Home Rule was unabated. Even *The Times* had allowed itself to be the victim of an impostor who produced a forged document purporting to show that Parnell was an accessory to the murder of Cavendish in Phoenix Park. Parnell was vindicated when his accuser broke down under cross-examination and subsequently shot himself. But shortly afterwards Parnell himself was repudiated for adultery by his strict Catholic supporters, and his death soon followed. The Irish Nationalists had to fight the Home Rule campaign of 1893 without his leadership. The fate of the Second Home Rule Bill was almost a foregone conclusion. On this occasion the opposition of Ulster, the province of an Anglo-Scottish Protestant majority, was intense. Ulster declined to be governed from Dublin as passionately as the Nationalists to be governed from Westminster; and the argument was as sound from the one as from the other. The Bill passed the Commons, but there was no moral drive behind it. The Lords threw it out, and England at least was relieved. A general election would have vindicated the Lords, and Gladstone knew it.

He accepted the decision and retired in 1894, an old man of eighty-five, a very great man, with a record of public service unsurpassed. When he died four years later his countrymen's eulogies were mingled with many a "but". Politics had become rabid and rancorous in a sense unknown when he was in his prime.

Salisbury and the Conservatives came in again in 1895, and Joseph Chamberlain became Colonial Secretary. He had made his reputation by clearing the slums of Birmingham, and he now found a somewhat similar task to be done in the tropical colonies, chiefly in the West Indies and West Africa. He found them backward and stagnant and nobody caring much about it. He described them as an undeveloped estate and set about practical improvements. These consisted of schools for the study of tropical diseases killing men and of pests attacking crops, of loans for the construction of harbours and railways, of subsidies for steamers, and of diplomatic action against unfair foreign competition. Railways were essential to the development of West Africa, where the tsetse-fly killed all draught animals. The Gold Coast, for example, by virtue of rail communications, was able to develop an entirely new cocoa industry, creating a society of peasant-proprietors, and to-day yielding the largest output in the world. The humanitarians who emancipated the West Indian slaves in 1833 did little else for them except to send missionaries to preach to them. In some of the islands the free negroes lived in abject poverty as squatters on abandoned plantations, cultivating root crops for the lowest form of subsistence. The plantations were abandoned because cane sugar was being forced out of the market by beet. European governments paid their subjects bounties on beet sugar exported to Great Britain, whose people thus got unnaturally cheap sugar at the expense of West Indian destitution. After a long struggle Chamberlain was able to get his government to forbid the importation of bounty-subsidized sugar. Cane sugar looked up, and at the same time other crops, notably bananas, were encouraged by Chamberlain's agricultural experts and carried to markets by steamer lines whose operations he fostered. Similar work was being done in the Malayan protectorates, although there its origination had been before Chamberlain's time. British East Africa was not then under the Colonial Office, nor was the newly-liberated

Sudan, but the Chamberlain methods were evident in them.

In spite of a common radicalism and familiarity with the business world and of a common enthusiasm for the Empire, Chamberlain and Rhodes were not kindred spirits. Rhodes desired the minimum of control from London and had plans in mind to which he foresaw that London might object. A strong man at the Colonial Office was the last thing he desired. Chamberlain on his side was for central control, and moreover he distrusted Rhodes and believed him capable of inadmissible proceedings. The South African millionaire in the 'nineties had become a figure in the English scene comparable to the nabob from India a century before.

Meanwhile the Rand was growing an increasingly unhappy place. The Transvaal Boers resented in their souls the invasion of an industrial multitude as numerous as themselves. Yet the industry was profitable, for President Kruger made it pay nine-tenths of the taxes of the Transvaal. The Boer policy resulting from these feelings was to tolerate the bare presence of the Uitlanders, but to take it out of them as much as possible. In spite of the revenue from the mines little or nothing was spent by the state on water, sewerage, education or other services for the Rand. If the newcomers had had votes they could have elected an opposition to Kruger that would soon have caused an improvement. But even those willing to assume Transvaal nationality were precluded from the franchise by restrictions designed to be insurmountable.

By 1895 the Uitlanders were convinced that they had nothing to hope from Kruger and were plotting a revolutionary movement to overthrow him, widen the franchise, and set up a more representative government. Rhodes, then prime minister of the Cape Colony, was interested and agreed to assist the rising by an invasion of the Transvaal. It was to be made by Jameson and a force of mounted troopers from the Chartered Company's service. A minister of the Crown was thus arranging to invade a neighbouring state in time of peace and without acquainting the Crown with his intention. It is almost incredible that a man of Rhodes's ability could have adopted such a plan. For if the stroke had succeeded, what then? His country could not have recognized the result without putting herself in the wrong before the world. Even an able

man may sometimes need sound principle to prevent him from making a fool of himself.

The Johannesburg conspirators talked a good deal, and all South Africa knew of their intention. Chamberlain at Whitehall heard of it, and hoped that they might succeed in cleaning up a rather corrupt régime. They were not under his jurisdiction, and he was under no obligation to warn Kruger. Kruger, however, needed no warning. He had noted also the Jameson force hovering on the border, of whose purpose Chamberlain did not know. Rhodes was not satisfied with an internal reform of the Transvaal. He wanted it annexed as a stage towards a dominion of South Africa. He insisted that the conspirators should hoist the British flag. They refused to go so far, and began to think of calling off the whole affair. Jameson then plunged over the border to force everybody's hand. Rhodes, seeing at the last that it was a terrible blunder, tried to stop him and failed. Jameson was rounded up by a Boer force before reaching the Rand, and surrendered on January 2, 1896.

The Jameson Raid was a disastrous and irresponsible piece of folly, not because it failed but because it was undertaken. That gifted and courageous men should have engaged in it shows that imperialism of their kind was a corrupting influence. The British public might have taken that view (although many would not) but for another unfortunate circumstance. The Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, whose country Great Britain had obliged in more than one colonial entanglement, sent a telegram to Kruger congratulating him on having repelled the attack "without appealing for the help of friendly powers". This was a scarcely veiled threat to the British, and the wording of the whole missive constituted an insult. Both were deliberate. The telegram was not an irresponsible impulse of the Kaiser's, as was at first thought, but was composed after consultation with his ministers. After long years of uneasiness about Germany the mask was off. The British government sent a fleet to sea to ensure that the troops of one "friendly power" would not reach South Africa, and the British public sought a chance of showing what they thought about it. Unhappily the demonstration took the form of an ovation to Jameson and his officers when they were brought to London for trial. The cheers were mainly a defiance

of the Kaiser, but they had the effect in South Africa of making the Boers think that all England condoned the Raid. But for the Kaiser's telegram it might have been possible so to handle the affair as to avert the war that was now brewing.

The war continued to brew. Kruger purchased great quantities of munitions with the money obtained from taxing the mines. The Orange Free State, the second Boer republic, which had not hitherto been on bad terms with the British, threw in its lot with him by making an alliance for common defence. The Dutch element in the Cape Colony, who had been supporters of Rhodes against the uncompromising attitude of the Transvaal, drove their prime minister from office and proclaimed their sympathy with Kruger. That astute veteran saw that it was possible to marshal all of Dutch blood into an anti-British combination, with the goodwill of the world to back them. From this time he and his lieutenants planned the expulsion of the British from South Africa. When his armaments were complete he would have force enough to overcome the British on the spot, while his European friends would intervene to prevent reinforcements from being sent. There was nothing immoral in all this, given Kruger's point of view. For seventy years hostility had existed between the trekkers and the British, who had annexed the Transvaal in its hour of need in 1877. Now the Raid had shown that there was no barrier between hostility and war. The Uitlanders on the Rand began to suffer persecution. When a Boer policeman murdered one of them he was let off and even commended. They sent a mass petition to the Queen, and no British government could have declined to take up their cause. Chamberlain and Salisbury, knowing the danger from Germany, were utterly averse to a South African war, but the facts had to be faced. They sent Sir Alfred Milner to negotiate with Kruger on the terms whereby the Uitlanders could qualify for the vote. Kruger had no real intention of allowing them to vote, and Milner perceived it. He made up his mind that war was inevitable, and urged that troops should be sent to the Cape. Kruger demanded that they should be recalled, and war began in October 1899.

The South African War opened with the Boer invasion of British territory in superior strength and the infliction of humiliating tactical



Defeats on British forces that were ill trained and ill led. But the Boers suffered strategical defeat in that they were delayed by the stubborn resistance of British garrisons in three besieged places. If the Boers could have taken these places, or had bypassed them and pressed on, they might have conquered Natal and the Cape down to the sea, have obtained the hoped-for European intervention, and have won the war. As it was, their delay over the sieges gave the British their second wind. Better leaders (Lord Roberts and Kitchener) were sent out, with sufficient troops to take the offensive. The year 1900 saw the sieges raised, the republics penetrated and their capitals taken, and Kruger a fugitive. He came to Europe, only to find that Germany no longer considered him a useful tool. These events decided the war, but it went on in guerrilla form for two more years, until in May 1902 the Boer generals in the field signed terms with Kitchener.

By the Peace of Vereeniging the Boers acknowledged British sovereignty, but were to receive responsible government as soon as practicable. They were also to have substantial money grants to restock the farms and repair the devastations of war. The terms were agreed to by Generals Louis Botha and Jan Smuts, among others. Kruger remained in exile until his death in the Netherlands in 1904. Rhodes had died before the end of the war.

The nineteenth century expired during the contest, and Queen Victoria did not survive the first month of its successor. The imperialism that coloured the last years of her reign was also dying. It had been nourished largely by false romance that appeals to raw democracy, but democracy was growing up, sobered by the realities of war. An unduly cynical mood was the reaction from the over-enthusiastic, and for a dozen years it was fashionable with advanced politicians to decry the Empire and take pleasure in anything that pointed to its weakening. These things were the outcome of the slapdash imperialism of Rhodes and Jameson, with whom the world unjustly coupled Chamberlain. It should not be forgotten that the Empire had another side, the development of personal freedom and enlightened government among peoples who had never known anything but barbaric oppression; and the promotion of better material conditions among those who were habituated to poverty.

and hunger. This was the work that was really congenial to Chamberlain and to hundreds of good servants of the Colonial Office who made less noise and public show than did the magnates of the Rand.

### 5. *Democracy*

The diseases of democracy are intolerance and corruption. One or the other or both together weakened democracy all over continental Europe during the period after the first great war, and made it possible for dictatorships to be established. In British affairs neither fault has ever developed so seriously as that. But there was in Great Britain a period of some thirty years from the first Home Rule contest to the outbreak of the first war in 1914 when intolerance was increasing. By the end of the nineteenth century political manners and conduct, and with them the prestige of government, had markedly deteriorated. In the pre-war period of the twentieth the process went much farther, and the public business of the nation was being transacted in a brawling bear-garden of threats and abuse which constituted a menace to true liberty. Personal corruption has never been evident in British politics since the establishment of democracy. The types specially vulnerable to temptation have been there, the man of big dealings and financial manipulations, to whom it is natural to regard influence and inside information as means of profit; and the poor man rising by ability, with an income not keeping pace with his growing importance and the style expected of him. But the temptation has been conquered, and the one or two instances to the contrary have been quite clearly exceptional. Two British circumstances have strengthened the resistance to corruption. The first is that the old aristocracy have played their part in the public leadership of an increasingly democratic age, and have not, as in France, withdrawn into sterile seclusion. The second is the existence of a service class, civil and combatant, with high standards of discipline and personal honour. India and the Empire and their employments have contributed much to the extension of this class, which is obviously a leaven in the political compound.

In the self-governing colonies, which in the new century began to be known as the dominions, the same conclusions can broadly

Be stated. The political intolerance, which even under the forms of liberty can kill liberty, has been absent. That seems to be a rule of conduct established throughout the English-speaking world. Perhaps we may regard it as Walpole's contribution to civilization. A democratically elected majority has the power and the legal right to do anything it pleases to the minority, even to the deprivation of all its liberty. The English-speaking democracies do not do this. They live and let live, the majority remembering that it will one day be the minority. Constitutional practice overrides legal power and sets a limit to what the majority may do. This has not been so in democracies of the non-English tradition. There the instinct of the majority has been to perpetuate its power by exterminating its opponents, and democracy has committed suicide in killing liberty. Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany are examples. In England itself there are always voices tempting the people to the same course, but there and in the dominions they have always been unheeded. In the matter of corruption the dominions have kept clear of anything approaching European standards of turpitude, although in places there has been a laxity not permitted in Great Britain.

The Dominion of Canada, formed in 1867, was the prototype of the new large imperial units. The Hudson's Bay Company surrendered its territorial rights in 1869, and the prairies from the Great Lakes to the Rocky Mountains were thrown open to settlement. Railways brought the settlers and marketed their crops, and in 1886 the Canadian Pacific was completed right through to British Columbia. By 1905 the original four provinces had become nine, and the Canada of the St. Lawrence extended, busy and populous, from ocean to ocean. In 1896 it discovered a goldfield at Klondyke in the far north, and gold has ever since been a Canadian commodity.

The roll of six Australian colonies was completed in 1859, when Queensland was separated from the parent New South Wales, as Victoria and Tasmania had already been. Western and South Australia were foundations made independently and were never parts of New South Wales. The six colonies at first showed no disposition to unite as Canada had done. But outside pressure drove

them together. The teeming millions of Asia beyond the northeast horizon were always ready to come in. The German seizure of part of New Guinea in the 'eighties was a shock to Australian security, as the German progress in various Pacific island groups was a threat to Australian trade. These things produced a federation movement, first powerful in 1889. It took eleven years to conquer, for there were barriers in the remoteness of Western Australia, the free trade tradition of New South Wales (the others being protectionist), and the vigorous distaste of Australians for surrendering any of their local liberty. At length the whole was converted. In 1900 the federal constitution was passed as an Act in the British Parliament. On the first day of the twentieth century it came into force, and the Commonwealth of Australia took its place among the British dominions and the world's nations.

New Zealand, a unitary state, preferred to remain single, and did not join the Australian federation. It was recognized as a dominion in 1907, but this was a matter of title which did not involve a change of status; for New Zealand had long been fully self-governing. The Maori wars were past history, and New Zealand prospered in peace, her economic fortunes linked to those of industrial Britain by the refrigerator ships that carried her mutton and dairy products. Newfoundland, like New Zealand, saw no need to federate with her neighbours. Although of dominion status in the constitutional sense, she never assumed the title, but preferred to be known as the Colony of Newfoundland, with a history going back to the fifteenth century.

A dominion of South Africa had been in Rhodes's mind in the 'nineties and in Lord Carnarvon's in the 'seventies. After the South African War it was accomplished. When the guerillas laid down their arms at Vereeniging Lord Milner was appointed to supervise reconstruction and restore the economic life of the country. He did so with remarkable success. Roads and railways were occupying all the available Kaffir labour. It was essential to get the gold mines working again without delay, since the revenue accruing from them was the main resource for financing all other reconstruction. Milner therefore got sanction from the home government for recruiting Chinese coolies indentured to serve for a term of years and then

to be repatriated. The coolies successfully bridged the gap before native labour was available, but the political consequences, as will be shown later, were sensational. Five years after the war recovery was sufficiently advanced to permit the fulfilment of the promise to grant responsible government to the ex-republics. It was done in 1907-8 by the Liberal ministry of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman then in power in Great Britain. General Botha became the first prime minister of the Transvaal. He and other Boer and British leaders lost no time in planning a combination of the South African provinces. In 1909 the Cape, Natal, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State agreed to form the Union of South Africa. The necessary Act was passed through Parliament, and the Union came into action in 1910. Its Parliament met at Capetown. Botha was its first prime minister, a generous man of wisdom and honour, who held office until his death in 1919.

The Imperial Conference (until 1907 called the Colonial Conference) was growing important as the organ of common counsel. It first met on the occasion of Victoria's jubilee in 1887. Other meetings followed, discussing imperial trade, communications and defence. The right to attend belonged to the prime ministers of all self-governing colonies, together with the prime minister and Colonial Secretary of the mother country. As the dominions were formed, the membership became smaller but more weighty. The Australian colonies, for example, were represented by six delegations at the Conference of 1897, and the Australian Commonwealth by one at that of 1902. South Africa had three representatives in 1907 and one in 1911; but the one spoke with a more powerful voice than the three. The Imperial Conference of 1911 represented the smallest number of separate units in the series. After it the number was increased by the representation of India during the first great war and of Southern Rhodesia on attaining dominion status in the 1920's. The Imperial Conference is not a Parliament with power to legislate, but a meeting to consult and advise. If, after discussion, the prime ministers think a given proposal desirable, they undertake to recommend it to their respective Parliaments. If those Parliaments adopt it, the measure becomes part of the law of the Empire. But the decision lies with the self-governing countries, not with the Imperial

Conference. Any member may stand out from a policy adopted by the others, as Great Britain herself did for years from the policy of preferential trade. So is liberty combined with common action.

In the early years of the twentieth century Nigeria provided an example of the imperialism in which there was more of service than of profit. The Royal Niger Company surrendered its charter in 1900, and the territory was organized in two protectorates. In the southern part there were native régimes in which tyrants maintained themselves by invoking magic and devilry to inspire terror, and so caused their subjects to submit to mass executions in which heads were offered by the hundred to the powers of darkness. In the north the native population were subject to foreign rulers, the Mahometan Fulani from the Sudan, who maintained themselves as a military caste by ruthless bloodshed and slave-raiding. The Company had not been strong enough to tackle these things. Its successor, the colonial service in the person of Colonel F. D. Lugard (afterwards Lord Lugard), was not much stronger in material force. Lugard had only a handful of British officers, and his men were enlisted natives ; but he had a genius for tropical warfare and administration. He challenged and overcame the military powers of the north, and then made them the agents of civilization. He did so by keeping the emirs and sultans in office to rule justly under British supervision as they had ruled bloodily by the light of nature. He did likewise in the south in some instances, although in others witchcraft and fetishism were so powerful a poison that there was no alternative but a clean sweep and a new beginning. Nigeria under Lugard became the classic development area of indirect rule and the application of what he called the Dual Mandate—the obligation to promote at the same time the welfare of Africans and the interests of mankind at large. In this connection his military conquest and political settlement were but preludes to social services, organized agriculture, profitable sales to European markets, an improved standard of living, and a source of raw materials for the world's industries. It is curious that for every dozen persons who know something of Rhodes hardly one has heard of Lugard, whose services to Africa and the Empire have been so great.

After the South African War Chamberlain undertook another great constructive reform, the consolidation of the Empire by means of preferential trade. He failed in his own lifetime to carry it, but the system came into practice by stages after his death. In Chamberlain's time the chief British imports from the colonies and dominions were foodstuffs and raw material for manufactures, with manufactured goods as the chief exports from Great Britain. A free trade Empire whose members should mutually ~~deal~~ be free of duties, like the States of the American Union, while maintaining a tariff against the outer world, was at first sight attractive. But by 1902 it was already impracticable. The dominions were beginning to establish their own manufactures, and to protect them, even against the mother country, by tariffs. They were, however, already giving the mother country preference in the shape of a lower tariff than they charged to foreigners. Chamberlain urged that in her turn Great Britain should give preference to colonial produce. That could only be done by levying duties on foreign produce, in other words, by taxing some of our raw materials or foodstuffs. To tax the raw materials of manufactures which had to be sold at competitive prices was plainly impossible; so it came to food, the taxation of foreign-produced foodstuffs. Chamberlain sweetened the pill to the British public by simultaneously urging a quite distinct proposition, that British industry was suffering from foreign competition and that protective duties ought to be imposed to keep out foreign manufactures. This course, he argued, would yield increased employment and higher wages to home industry, and more than compensate for the food duties. Free trade was certainly weakening in its hold on British opinion, and Chamberlain found many more supporters than he would have done thirty years earlier. But they were not enough to turn the country over to the new policy. At the three succeeding general elections the advocates of tariff reform and imperial preference failed to secure a majority, although it is true that on each occasion those proposals were not the leading issue and the voting was more strongly influenced by other controversies. Chamberlain's fear that the Empire would weaken or dissolve in default of preferential trade turned out to be unjustified. It was a point of view which made too little allowance for blood

and tradition. He himself was struck down by permanent illness in 1906 and died in 1914.

Lord Salisbury saw the war ended in South Africa and then resigned, to die a year afterwards. A. J. Balfour succeeded him as prime minister and head of the Conservative party, which had gained a fresh lease of power by the general election of 1900. The Balfour ministry (1902-5) is often regarded as a dying fall, a swift decline from the Conservative ascendancy of the late nineteenth century. So in retrospect it may appear, for it ended in a great defeat and was plagued by the tariff controversy, which virtually split the party. Yet the ministry was also in some sort a revival of Conservative energy and initiative after the hand of an ageing leader was removed. It passed two first-class measures of constructive reform, the Education Act of 1902 and the Land Purchase Act of 1903. It cleared up a generation of colonial squabbles with France by the agreement of 1904, which soon ripened into the friendship of the Entente Cordiale. And it faced the unwelcome fact of German hostility by initiating a reconstruction of the Navy and a redistribution of its force.

The Education Act laid down an advanced and sensible programme linking primary, secondary and university education and making the county councils and larger city councils the education authorities. The scope and foresight of the measure are attested by the fact that forty years were to elapse in a period of rapid social change before another overhaul of the system became necessary. In the perennial wrangle of the religious denominations for the right to mould the young, some were left with a grievance, and for a time the extremists made a practice of refusing to pay their rates and earning a cheap martyrdom by taking the very mild consequences. But long after this phase died out the Act was worthily serving the community. The Land Purchase Act rounded off the social change in Ireland which had been going on in stages since the Act of 1885.

The Anglo-French agreement was due to the realization that both nations had to fear the unscrupulous power of Germany and that Germany had been the gainer by their past dissensions. It removed the causes by settling the various imperial disputes or a plan of give and

take. The French ceased their obstruction to British work in Egypt in return for a recognition of their free hand in Morocco. They gave up vexatious special rights on the Newfoundland fishing coast in return for territory in West Africa. The two powers agreed to a condominium or joint rule of the New Hebrides, where Australia had been perturbed by indications of a coming French annexation. They also agreed to limit and define their influence in Siam, the buffer between British Burma and French Indo-China. The conclusion of the agreement in 1904 was quickly followed by the substitution of friendship for hostility in the mutual attitude of the two peoples. On both sides the post-1870 imperialism was being transformed into a sense of responsibility for peace and civilization. The personal influence and popularity in France of King Edward VII went far to achieve this result.

Germany quickly grew jealous of the new friendship, and in 1905 the Kaiser visited Morocco and dramatically asserted a claim to German interests which no one had heard of before. For the rest of the year there was a possibility that Germany might force on a "preventive war" before her objects of dislike should grow stronger. Her army was equal to the task. Her navy was not, but was being increased on a long-term programme. At this juncture the British Admiralty adopted the Dreadnought type of battleship, whose armament rendered all others obsolete. It was complained that this nullified the previous British superiority and enabled Germany to start level in a new era of construction. To this it has been answered that the Dreadnought also rendered the Kiel Canal obsolete, and that until it had been widened to take Dreadnoughts Germany would not be able to fight a naval war. The reconstruction of the canal was finished in the summer of 1914. If there is anything in the coincidence, it would seem that the Dreadnought helped to postpone war for nine years. The friendship with France permitted a more efficient grouping of the two navies. The French fleet was concentrated in the Mediterranean and the British in the North Sea and the Atlantic.

In spite of this sound work the ministry was losing grip and the Conservative party was getting out of touch with national sentiment. Chamberlain had resigned in 1903 to carry on his tariff campaign

unhampered. Balfour was not an inspiring leader, and the general impression that the ministry's biggest man had gone did more than anything to suggest that it was doomed and moribund. The opposition was waiting its chance. It consisted of Liberals of Gladstone's tradition, a diminishing body chiefly represented among the leaders; of a larger number of Radicals who were ready in practice for socialist policies; of a new Labour party not hitherto represented, except by one or two individuals; of a group who called themselves Liberal-Labour; and of the Irish Nationalists. The average tendency of this combination, except of the Irish, was to invoke state action for social reform and the direction of the people's lives, and to disregard the resulting danger to liberty to a much greater extent than had been evident in any political party that had enjoyed power since the 1830's. That is the ground for saying that the classic Liberalism of Victorian times was no longer a living force, for its ideal had been the sweeping away of restraints on liberty. The people of Great Britain had discarded their flamboyant imperialism and were in the mood for domestic politics and attractive reforms. In spite of the enormous rise in well-being since the 'forties and the recovery from the set-back of the 'seventies, there was still a large block of poverty which men were no longer inclined to tolerate as inevitable. There was also the insecurity arising from fluctuations of trade creating unemployment, and a feeling that this also was an evil capable of treatment. An opposition is always able to make more convincing promises than the party in power, since the retort to the latter is, If this ought to be done, why haven't you done it? These circumstances promised a considerable change at the impending general election.

The change was much greater than anyone expected. Labour was aggrieved at a severe rebuff to the trade unions in the Taff Vale decision, an affair of the law, but calling for redress which a Conservative majority would be unlikely to give. Convinced free traders and many poor people were alarmed at the prospect of a victory for food taxes, for a good proportion of the Conservatives had declared for Chamberlain. Nonconformists were traditionally Radical, and owed a grudge for the Education Act. But the greatest factor in tipping the balance was the South African transaction

already described, the introduction of Chinese labour into the gold-mines. The measure, which had greatly hastened the recovery of South Africa, was represented as due solely to the greed of the mineowners, connived at by the Conservative government. Lurid statements were made on the morals of the Chinese and on the misery of their condition on the Rand. Coloured posters showed Chinamen in chains and the shade of a British soldier saying, "This is what I died for". It was explicitly stated that the Chinese were slaves and that the government had reintroduced the evil that Wilberforce had cast out of the Empire seventy years before. Never had an election cry achieved such success. It outweighed all else in the campaign of January 1906, and in a fever of inverted imperialism the voters who had once cheered Rhodes and Jameson now spurned the mineowners and the government that abetted them. The Conservatives would have lost the 1906 election in any case, but "Chinese Slavery" almost exterminated them and gave their opponents the greatest majority since the Reform Act.

The effect on subsequent politics was unfortunate. "Chinese Slavery" was, to put it mildly, an exaggeration, as was shown when the "slaves", being offered their freedom on the morrow of the election, rejected it and insisted on working to the end of their contracts. The fact that it had succeeded so well was a poison in the years that followed. It tempted its exploiters and its victims to further extravagances. Both sides made reckless statements and were filled with indignation. The Conservatives held that they had suffered from foul play, and used their majority in the Lords to retaliate by throwing out their opponents' bills. The people quickly realized that they had been led farther than they intended, and the voting at by-elections began to go heavily against the government. This encouraged the Conservatives in the Lords to commit a breach of the constitution by throwing out the budget of 1909, with a consequent intensification of party hatred, the holding of two general elections in one year, and a prolonged domestic crisis over Home Rule at a time when the country ought to have been closing its ranks and looking to its weapons in face of the German peril. The period 1906-14 is one of the least edifying in our political record. Yet it saw the achievement of deep and wide reforms that

laid the social foundations of the twentieth century. It was the manner rather than the matter of the proceedings that worked enduring harm.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, a wealthy and popular Radical, became the new prime minister. The old guard of Liberalism was represented by Sir Edward Grey and R. B. Haldane, who took the Foreign Office and the War Office respectively. H. H. Asquith, a Liberal with Radical affinities, became Chancellor of the Exchequer. D. Lloyd George, a Welsh nonconformist, John Burns, a workmen's leader, and Winston S. Churchill, a former Conservative who had felt that as a free trader he could not stay in that party, were the most prominent in the Radical wing of the ministry. Grey and Haldane, by the nature of their work, were not deeply involved in party controversies; in fact, Grey stated that he would continue the policy of his Conservative predecessor. The ball was at the feet of the Radicals, who were fortified by the appearance of a new Labour party, 53 strong, in the 1906 Parliament. The Labour men did not yet call themselves socialists, but in effect they were. Churchill, like his father in the 'eighties, had been a Conservative of the advanced type to which the transition to Radicalism involved little change of principle.

The new government led off with two measures in the Labour interest, the Trade Disputes Act, abolishing the disability of the trade unions under the Taff Vale judgement, and a new Workmen's Compensation Act, greatly strengthening the existing law on compensation for injuries arising out of employment. It also passed an Act for the provision of small-holdings in land, an attempt to re-create a genuine peasantry; but the result was disappointing owing to lack of keenness in the County Councils responsible for getting the work done. Haldane reorganized the Army, making the most important reform since Cardwell's time. He made the Regular forces more ready to take the field with efficiency, regrouped various auxiliary services into the Territorial Army, and founded the Officers' Training Corps in schools and universities. He provided the basis on which Kitchener was able to build the extraordinary military expansion of the first German war. Campbell-Bannerman retired through ill health in 1908, and Asquith became premier.

The promotion of Lloyd George to Chancellor of the Exchequer strengthened the Radical influence, and social reform gathered greater strength. Old-age pensions, proposed long before by Chamberlain, were enacted in 1908, when also a Coal Mines Act limited miners' hours to eight per day, and a Children's Act prohibited various practices such as the sale of drink and tobacco to the young, taking children into public-houses, and causing them to beg in the streets. Next year saw the establishment of Labour Exchanges to deal with finding work for the unemployed.

The above reforms were generally popular. But some of them cost money which the Conservatives said should be spent on national defence. For Germany was building Dreadnoughts, and a phase was in sight in which she would have something like equality in naval strength unless British efforts were accelerated. A popular agitation for more battleships, with the war-cry, "We want eight, and we won't wait", impressed the government into compliance. But the contemporary crusade of Lord Roberts for compulsory military training obtained much less support. The popular literature of the period was full of the thesis that Germany would strike if and when it suited her—a forecast entitled *The Invasion of 1910* was worked out in great detail to show the possibility of a sudden German onslaught—but the national instinct held that concentration on the Navy was the best defence. The air was as yet negligible. The Channel was first crossed by an aeroplane in 1909. Some misguided persons placed a congratulatory memorial to mark the spot where it landed on the Dover cliffs.

Other government bills, not so generally popular, met the demands of particular groups of supporters, and were slaughtered by the Conservative majority in the House of Lords. These included an Education Bill to remedy the nonconformist grievance, a Licensing Bill to restrict drinking facilities, and a Plural Voting Bill to prevent persons qualified in different constituencies from voting in more than one. About the first and the last the public were indifferent, and on licensing the general opinion was hostile to the bill. So far, the Lords were not outraging the democratic sentiment of the country.

Lloyd George had attained a key position as Chancellor of the

Exchequer, and he determined on bold attack to revive the wilting morale of the party. To pay for old-age pensions and the Navy, to finance future reforms, and perhaps to take revenge for the defunct Licensing Bill, his budget of 1909 introduced super-tax on large incomes, new and far-reaching taxes on the value of land, new taxes to be paid by licensees of public-houses, and increased duties on spirits and tobacco. As he said himself, the rich were to be taxed for the benefit of the poor, and he promised further "refreshing fruits" as a consequence. It is a political axiom that resentment inspires more votes than gratitude, and the correct Conservative tactics would have been to allow the budget to take its course and generate its own consequences. But the Conservative leaders were over-confident. They believed that the government had already lost its hold on the country and that a general election would reverse the decision of 1906. The defeat of the budget would compel an appeal to the country, and the Lords therefore threw out the 1909 Finance Bill by a large majority.

It was an offence as well as an error. For centuries taxation had been the prerogative of the Commons. Although the Lords had a legal right to reject a finance bill, they had no constitutional right. Educated men realized that, whatever their private opinions on politics, the public interest required that constitutional right should prevail. The more ignorant were whipped to enthusiasm by Lloyd George's speeches in which class hatred was stimulated and the poor were invited to help themselves from the pockets of the rich. Political manners and the appeal of political argument, long on the decline, fell suddenly to a new low standard. The immediate effect of this appeal was to save the government. The long-term effect may well be that even to-day democratic politics, the hope of civilization, function on a lower level than they might otherwise do. On the one side a piece of sharp practice, on the other an incitement to political action as a means of gain, there is not much to be said for either. Dizzy and the Grand Old Man had never gone so low. A *Punch* cartoon once reproved them for mud-throwing, but it was not mud as the twentieth-century protagonists understood the term.

Asquith dissolved Parliament and held a general election in

January 1910. It disappointed both sides. Liberals and Conservatives were returned in almost equal numbers, the Labour Party was reduced to 40, and the Irish Nationalists remained at 82. Liberals and Labour together could therefore constitute a majority only if the Irish did not vote against them; and the Irish did not like the budget. The Irish price for supporting it was obvious. From the January election Home Rule became once more the dominating issue in politics.

The Lords passed the budget which they had rejected, but that was not the end of the matter. By using their legal powers unconstitutionally they had courted a curtailment of them. The way had also to be cleared for the passage of a Home Rule Bill which they would be likely to reject. The Parliament Act of 1911 fulfilled these purposes. It was introduced in 1910 and followed by a second general election in December of that year. The parties returned with their respective numbers virtually unchanged, and the Parliament Bill, behind which stood Home Rule, had therefore the same pretension to a public mandate as the budget. The Lords submitted and passed it. The Parliament Act was a moderate and temperate measure in surprising contrast to the angry invective that surrounded its birth. It prevented the Lords from amending or rejecting a finance bill, a thing which in modern times they had never sought to do until 1909. As for general legislation, if the Commons passed a bill three times in the space of not less than two years in the same Parliament, it would become law without the Lords' assent. The Lords thus retained a veto on legislation passed in a stale or expiring House of Commons, but not in one freshly elected. This veto was strengthened by another provision that the Commons should endure for only five years instead of the previous seven. The Lords' veto was therefore neutralized for the first three years after a general election, although during that time they could suspend a bill for two years and thus give opportunity for second thoughts.

The December Parliament was less than a year old when the Act was passed, and so there was full time to carry Home Rule without seeking a further mandate. Before proceeding with its fortunes there is a later batch of reforms to be mentioned. The most notable of these was the Insurance Act of 1911, with its contributions

from the state, the employer and the employee to a fund for providing medical service and, in certain trades, unemployment benefits. Although Lloyd George recommended this scheme to the workers as something for nothing or, to use his own words, "ninepence for fourpence", the significant point was that participation was made compulsory. The compulsion has applied to all the subsequent extensions of the insurance plan, whether for health or unemployment, and every wage or salary earner below a certain income level has been registered and ticketed. Coupled with a wide extension of the functions of the Labour Exchanges, this has produced a practical curtailment of personal liberty, the price paid for the reforms of Radical Socialism. It has also helped to create a vested interest of state employees whose jobs depend on the continuance of these controls and whose promotion will be accelerated by their extension. Three other reforms passed in the 1911-14 period were political rather than social. They were the Act for the payment of salaries to members of the Commons (an old Chartist demand), the Plural Voting Act (previously rejected by the Lords) and the Welsh Disestablishment Act, disestablishing and partially disendowing the Anglican church in Wales on the reasonable ground that the great majority of the Welsh people did not belong to it.

A new Home Rule Bill, the third, was duly introduced, passed by the Commons and rejected by the Lords in 1912. The process was repeated in 1913, and would have been in 1914 but for the outbreak of war with Germany and the need for shelving domestic disputes. In 1914, therefore, the Lords passed the Home Rule Bill on the understanding that it should not come into force until after the war, when there would be more chance of reconsideration. The need for second thoughts lay in the attitude of Ulster, which was determined not to come under the rule of a Dublin Parliament. The reasons were lack of national identity, the Ulsterman being of Anglo-Scottish blood; religious difference, the majority being Protestant in Ulster and Catholic in southern Ireland; and economic divergence, Celtic Ireland being chiefly agricultural and unlikely to understand or sympathize with the industrial interests of the Belfast area. These were weighty reasons for excepting Ulster from the operation of Home Rule, but the Irish Nationalists, who had

it<sup>h</sup> in their power to turn out the Asquith government, were firm for the inclusion of the whole of Ireland. Ulster took the matter seriously, swore to resist by force of arms, and made preparations to that end. Officers of the regular Army made it plain that they would not lead their troops against the Ulster Volunteers. Southern Ireland enrolled its own Volunteer force, and both sides successfully ran cargoes of rifles and ammunition from abroad. Civil war in Ireland seemed unavoidable in the summer of 1914, when the Home Rule Bill was passing the Commons for the third time. A conference of party leaders met at Buckingham Palace to find a way out. The only way was the exception of Ulster, and the conference broke down on the extent of territory to be excepted. All this was engrossing the public interest while the greatest war ever known was approaching almost unnoticed. When war with Germany had been declared, the Lords, as stated above, passed the bill and hoped for reconciliation at a later stage. The Ulster Volunteers and some of the Irish Volunteers joined the armies that set out to fight the Hun.

### 6. War

The Great War of 1914 had many causes, so many, in fact, that if one looks only at the immediate antecedents it is impossible to state what *the* cause was. The Anglo-German hostility is one line of approach, a hostility which emanated solely from the German side. It was noticeable from the rise of the German colonial party in the 'eighties and their envy of the fact that British settlers had already occupied the best colonial regions which the nineteenth century had to offer. The reason why Germany had not colonized any share of the lands that grew into the British dominions was that she had not had any colonial ambitions and had not sought to take part when the colonizing process was going on. Yet the propaganda of her later-born colonial interest denounced the greed of England and proclaimed that a wrong had been done to Germany. The acquisition of shares of tropical Africa and the Pacific islands did not satisfy the German imperialists, but it did give rise to the undertaking in the 'nineties to create a great navy. In 1899 German naval construction had not gone far, or Germany might have intervened

in the South African War. But afterwards, and particularly after the Dreadnought period had set in, she forced on a race in battleship building. England could not afford to be outclassed in this race, for it would have laid her open to invasion by a power which had an army ten times as numerous as hers. The fear of German naval superiority was an ever-present irritation and a cause of national expenditure which the British would rather have devoted to social reform.

The Franco-German division was obvious enough. Germany had provoked the war of 1870, although Napoleon III had been fool enough to facilitate Bismarck's intention. Germany had then done a harsh thing in exacting the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine as the spoil of victory. The French could not forgive it, and Germany with uneasy conscience expected one day a war of revenge. She was troubled at the rapid French recovery after 1870, and in 1875 was minded to make a preventive war by attacking France again before she could grow stronger. Germany intrigued to cause dissension between France and Great Britain and was alarmed when they made up their differences in 1904. Still further was she alarmed when Great Britain and Russia made a similar settlement in 1907. The three powers, Britain, France and Russia, constituted the Triple Entente, a friendship, but only an alliance as between France and Russia. Germany, Austria and Italy composed the Triple Alliance, pledged to military action; but Italy grew more and more a doubtful starter in such a war as Germany meditated. The firm allies were Germany and Austria, who had a common interest in the March to the East, the penetration and ultimate absorption of the Turkish Empire. Germany thus feared a French revenge and at the same time had Balkan and Asiatic ambitions which would arouse the hostility of Russia. For Russia regarded herself as the protector of the Balkan Slavs and the destined inheritor of the Turks' overlordship over the Balkan peninsula.

The Balkan conflict was directly Austro-Russian, but behind Austria stood Germany. The Austrian Empire of 1914 was a second-class great power not capable of unaided aggression against her eastern neighbour. That is the reason for regarding Germany as the real culprit although Austria on the face of it provoked the

war; for Germany could have stopped it, and did not. Neither was Germany passively dragged in by her junior ally. She had determined for various reasons that a general war would suit her after the harvest of 1914, and to that end she utilized the assassination of an Austrian archduke by a Serbian gunman in June. That the war began in 1914 was due to an agreement of the German and Austrian military chiefs earlier in that year. The Archduke's assassination was a gift of fortune that was made to fit into the scheme. But before it took place the German chiefs had made long-term arrangements for a war to begin that summer, and not later. The war which actually occurred was not, of course, the war which Germany intended. That was to have been a swift affair like those of 1870 and 1866, over in three months or so, with a decisive beating-down of enemies surprised by German training and organization. It very nearly did work out in that way.

The mass of evidence on the immediate chain of events that preceded the outbreak is so immense that differences of interpretation and emphasis are inevitable, and greater knowledge makes less certainty. There is, however, no doubt that Germany created and maintained the conditions that made war sure to come: the doctrine that war was the German's trade, that it was a natural and necessary function of life, that preparation for it must be the prime activity of the intervals of peace, and that at the moment favourable for action there must be no hesitation or waste of will-power on regrets or negotiations. This was the root cause why the warm liberal humanity of pre-1870 Europe chilled into the militarism of the following age. Until that poison-root is torn out and burnt, the world's civilization is declining. There is not much time, for civilization is far gone.

These few pages cannot give even a sketch of the war of 1914-18, so great was its complexity. They will limit themselves to noting some of its effects on the British democracies, and of their reactions to it.

There had been an Imperial Conference in 1911 at which, for the first time, the British Foreign Secretary attended. He was there to tell the Empire's statesmen of the decline of peace, the growing certainty that Germany intended to stake the life of Europe, and

more, on a new stroke for greater mastery. His revelations were secret, and little was said to shake the public preoccupation with social reforms and the clamours of domestic politics. But the premiers dispersed with grave matters in their minds, and the consequence of the meeting was a quick and sharp response to the call of 1914, instead of the bewildered pause that might have answered it.

In Great Britain itself few of the public took interest in the details of foreign affairs. Everyone knew in a general way that the Germans had been anti-British for twenty years, that Kaiser Wilhelm II was given to making provocative speeches, and that the German fleet aimed at being, but was not yet, stronger than the British. But the steady increase of the danger signs made little impression, and while the crisis of July developed the British public thought mainly about Ireland and the summer holidays. Until war was only a day or two ahead it was not generally expected. There had been three European crises in the previous ten years, and all had passed off; and it was thought that this one would.

Then on August 4 the country was at war, for the first time in living memory in a first-class European war. The Regular reserves were called up, the Territorial Army embodied, and volunteers called for by Kitchener for a vast number of battalions of a new army to be grafted on the existing Regulars and Territorials. The decision had been taken to employ the maximum military strength in fighting on the continent side by side with the French. There was another possible policy, that of the older wars in which British military force had been small and complementary to sea power; but no one raised the question, and it was accepted that the whole available manhood of the nation must take part in the continental struggle. The response was enthusiastic. The ranks of the Territorials, who expected to be in action before the New Army, were quickly filled and overflowing into new formations. The New Army itself took in volunteers by the hundred thousand, at a greater rate than it could find instructors and equipment. It had, in fact, a million men by the end of the year. Volunteering provided all the men who could be used for some time to come.

In the dominions the peril was recognized as the fateful moment

of which Grey had warned the premiers in 1911. Before war was declared each dominion government assured Great Britain of its support. Canada, Australia and New Zealand, ~~published~~ armies. Botha in South Africa, only twelve years after the end of its own war, could only promise that the Union would provide its own defence; but he alone had Germans on his frontier, all the others being protected by the sea. Botha first put down, with his own South African forces, a small rebellion of the irreconcilables of 1902, who were sufficiently deluded to think that a German victory would perpetuate their independence. He then invaded and conquered South West Africa, after which South African troops served in East Africa and in France. Thus South Africa in the end was better than its word. Canada, Australia and New Zealand began with volunteer armies, joined by a very high proportion of their fit men. Canada and New Zealand both introduced compulsion in the later stages. Australia held referendums on compulsion and rejected it. But Australian casualties were higher in proportion to the population than Canadian, and very few acceptable men failed to volunteer. Australian soldiers voted in the referendums, and most of them were against compulsion.

In sum, the Germans had to fight one and a quarter million men from the fifteen millions of the white population in the dominions, and these men were of higher quality than their own troops. The Empire, in fact, provided Germany with two pieces of instruction: first, that free democratic citizens, with no interest in the military life unless they are compelled to fight, may make better soldiers than peace-time conscripts trained by professionals who give soldiering all their thoughts; and second, that the loose, informal, co-operate-as-you-please association of the British self-governing communities, instead of falling to pieces according to German predictions, proved strong and self-sacrificing to an extent at least equal to that of the strictly controlled states of the Reich.

It is incorrect to regard the dominions as fighting out of loyalty to Great Britain. There was undoubtedly a sentiment of love for the mother country, but the loyalty was something different. The idea was already well advanced of the British Empire as an association of equals, and the loyalty was not that of all to one but of

all to all, to the British ideal and way of life wherever it was to be found. Apart from ideals, the Australian fighting in France knew that he was defending his own home, for a German victory in Europe would assuredly have been followed by a German invasion of Australia and any other regions that Germans coveted—and there were few that they did not.

In Great Britain volunteering had produced a great army by the beginning of 1916, the army that was to turn the scale in the later stages of the war. But it was ceasing to produce enough men to replace the casualties. To keep the field forces up to strength compulsion was necessary and was adopted by Acts of February and May 1916. Substantially the army that fought up to the Battle of the Somme in the latter half of that year was a volunteer force, not only in its British but its dominion troops. The Ulster Division, for example, almost annihilated in the first days of the Somme, were the volunteers who had enrolled to resist Home Rule.

Volunteering would have lasted longer but for the counter-attraction of munitions work. Even with the comparatively small British force in the field in the winter of 1914-15 the shortage of shells and other munitions was alarming, while the training of the New Army was delayed by want of weapons. Revelations of lack of foresight on the part of the government caused an outcry, and in July 1915 the Ministry of Munitions was formed. Under Lloyd George it acted with great energy and "delivered the goods". But it competed with the Army for men. Its high wages tempted many who would otherwise have enlisted, and by the time that compulsory service was begun it had one and a half million men in its industries. It was this more than any other factor that made compulsion for the forces inevitable. Compulsion and rates of pay comparable to those of the serving men might well have been applied to the munition workers. The high wages obtained by them were a cause of social ill-feeling and contributed to the inflation of the post-war period. But the whole munitions problem was unexpected and its solutions were hastily improvised. The South African War had been a war of rifles and horses, a war of cheap equipment. No one had foreseen the artillery development and the other material calls of 1914-18.

them to a halt before they could drive the British into the sea or the French back to Paris. The counter-stroke came in the summer, with the arrival of the American vanguard (the U.S. having joined the Allies in 1917) and with the turn-out of the last man from British and French reserves. The German army had made its last effort and failed. Thenceforward it stumbled, crumbled and disintegrated to the armistice of November 11. The terms of that armistice were such as no army with an ounce of fight left in it could have yielded. They alone are a refutation of the Nazi propaganda that the army was not beaten in 1918.

By participating to the full in the four and a half years of military warfare the British Isles suffered over 2½ million casualties out of a population of 46 millions. The combined dominion armies, 640,000 casualties out of a total dominion population of 16 millions. It was a dreadful cost, and some have said that much of it could have been avoided by greater reliance on sea power. The supporters of the actual strategy (always the majority and the most weighty of the authorities) have answered that to have allowed Germany to overrun the continent, as she would have done without the British army's intervention, would have been the ruin of England, which could have made no resistance to an invader based on the Channel coast of France. The discussion remained hypothetical until 1940, when by force of circumstance it was put to the test.

### 7. *Modern India*

After the Mutiny the period of Indian wars was over. The interests of the new time were in the perfection of administration and the material improvements which it could yield. Under the crown men of high ability continued to be appointed viceroys, and beneath them served a bureaucracy recruited from the best material in Great Britain. The Indian administration and services of the later nineteenth century were the antithesis of those existing in the days of the nabobs a hundred years before.

The Indian railways of Dalhousie's planning were nearly all constructed after the Mutiny. They were a costly public service rather than a dividend-paying investment, for all material had to be

brought from England, and Indian labour was untrained in engineering work. But the making of these great trunk lines and their local ramifications illustrates one aspect of the mutual reaction of Great Britain and India. The railways were one of the imperial works which employed British industries and contributed to the mid-Victorian prosperity. They were also an indispensable agent in conquering famine and saving millions of lives in India. Further, although they were run without visible profit, they saved military expenditure by making smaller forces more efficient for the preservation of order. Armed resistance to government could hope for no success, and the railway system was an element in Indian pacification.

Famine due to the failure of the monsoon rainfall had cursed India since time's beginning. The crops withered, the water supply dried up, the animals died, and then the people died. Geographical factors prevented this from happening over the whole sub-continent at one time, but every few years it did happen in some substantial area. The remedy was to supply the area of famine from the areas of plenty. That required a government in control of both, with financial and administrative resources able to cope with a large-scale emergency, and with a command of rapid transport for bulky goods. No such government had ever before existed in India. In the 'seventies the British-Indian government tackled the problem and in 1883 produced the Famine Code, a scheme of permanent, long-term and emergency measures. Annual sums were set aside from revenue for the maintenance of reserve food stocks, irrigation by reservoirs and canals was subsidized, new wheat-growing areas were opened up by government irrigation, quick movements of supplies into famine-stricken areas were planned in advance, and the switching of administrative personnel to emergency famine relief was worked out in readiness for application. Foresight, accumulation and staff-work conquered Indian famine as a mass-slayer by the opening of the twentieth century. The breakdown in Bengal in 1943 was due to abnormal war conditions. Its death-roll was small compared with those of the past.

Literary education, the employment of literate Indians in government services, the study of Western law, history and politics, and

the multiplication of newspapers were bound to produce a demand for political enfranchisement. British rulers who encouraged these things foresaw their effects and regarded themselves as promoters of Indian development. There was never any British conception of a dead hand inhibiting Indian progress. In 1885 a body of Indian reformers met to discuss the claim of Indians to a greater share in their government. The meeting called itself the Indian National Congress and had the goodwill of the viceroy. In 1892 an Indian Councils Act provided that Indian members should be added to the legislative councils of India and its provinces, and that such members might be elected from limited constituencies. It was not possible to go faster than this, the provision of political training, for many years to come. The modern administration of a huge population requires habits of thought which were foreign to India and could only gradually be created.

Indian leaders, nevertheless, were beginning to demand faster progress and to foment what was euphemistically called "unrest" in order to obtain it. The early signs of the movement were manifest in the 1890's. The period of transition to the fully political India of the present century was covered by the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, 1898-1905. He was a gifted man, with great administrative talent and powers of work, a love for the history and past civilization of India, and a deep sympathy for its existing population. He determined to improve services, destroy abuses and make war on injustice; and in the latter aspect he was impartially severe whether the culprits might be Indians or his own countrymen. He did great work for India, whose governmental machine, honestly and honourably run, was growing nevertheless clogged with routine and the unhurried ease of half a century of peace. He expected others to take his own high view of public duty, and he was never kind to fools or knaves. Unhappily he regarded political reformers as one ~~as~~ the other, and they in their turn denounced and misrepresented his most useful measures. When he left India the administration was tuned up and efficient, many abuses had been killed, and the agitation for political reform was in full cry. The twentieth century had begun.

For four years a small but active minority indulged in seditious

propaganda, created disturbances, and promoted the assassination of officials. Their purpose was to obtain complete self-government, and their methods bore a close resemblance (apart from assassination) to those of the militant women in England in the same period. Three major provinces, Bengal, Bombay and the Punjab, were affected. The Radical government in power in England from the end of 1905 was certainly not averse to political concessions, and its Secretary for India, Lord Morley, had a distaste for high-handed imperialism. His reforming measure of 1909, commonly known, from the participation of the viceroy, as the Morley-Minto reform, is significant as showing how far responsible men thought it safe to go at that time. According to present ideas it did not go very far. It extended the membership of the various Indian councils, central and provincial, and provided that the majority on each should be non-official and for the most part elected. Indian opinion was thus to be represented. But the councils were to have no power of controlling the administration, which might do as it saw fit after hearing their opinions. The reform of 1909 introduced representative but not responsible government.

Many Indian leaders were satisfied, especially as the measure was not declared to be final. Others remained recalcitrant. But the sting was taken out of extremism for some years to come. In 1911 India gave a loyal welcome to George V, who personally held a great durbar at Delhi and proclaimed that ancient city the capital in place of the British-built Calcutta. By 1914 dissatisfaction was beginning to grow again, and demands were heard for a new step forward. But for the outbreak of war the close of the year would most likely have witnessed another bout of active sedition. The war revealed that for most of the Indian leaders the quarrel was a family affair not to be pursued in the face of peril from without. They called off the agitation and assured the government of their loyalty. The mass of the Indian peoples, who in any case had no interest in politics, gave full support to the war effort. India raised a million soldiers, all volunteers, and could have doubled that number had officers been available.

In India, as in Ireland, the government policy was to suspend reform until after the war. But the war lasted longer than most

people expected, and the advocates of political change grew impatient. Mrs A. Besant, a resident in India, did harm by fomenting anti-British suspicions and organizing a Home 'Rule movement. From 1916 sedition raised its head again and its leaders were ready to take advantage of post-war discontent. The new Lloyd George government in England admitted its debt to the Indian war effort, and in 1917 declared its intention of greatly increasing the share of Indians in every branch of the administration, with a view to the gradual development of responsible government. But how does one "gradually develop" responsible government? The answer was given in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918 and the Government of India Act based on it in 1919; and the solution of the problem was by the new method of dyarchy, which in this context means two different but coexistent governments. Government business in the Indian provinces was divided into two categories, reserved and transferred. On reserved subjects the governor carried on the administration, as in the past, through the medium of his own executive council, whose members were appointed from above. On transferred subjects he acted on the advice of ministers who held office so long as they commanded the support of the legislative council, 70 per cent of whose members were elected by Indian voters. It was made possible to transfer subjects of government business from one list to the other, and so gradually to increase the scope of the responsible element. For the central government of India the Act of 1919 provided a two-chamber legislature like those of the British dominions, but the governor-general's executive council was not made responsible to it. In the centre, therefore, representative but not responsible government prevailed.

India was in a wild state in 1919. The end of the war had not brought peace of mind. The extremists who now dominated the Indian National Congress denounced the constitutional reform as inadequate. Returned soldiers who had fought loyally were full of discontent with the conditions of civil life. Prices were high and profiteering rampant. The great post-war influenza raged through the country and killed far more people than the worst famine for a century. In the Punjab a revolution was brewing, with rioting, assassinations and destruction of property. The government pro-

hibited a mass meeting at Amritsar. When it was held in defiance, General R. E. Dyer dispersed it by opening fire and killing four hundred people. Dyer was repudiated by his superiors, and he has been generally condemned, not for action, but for excessive action. But the affair proved to be the turning-point, and the revolt subsided.

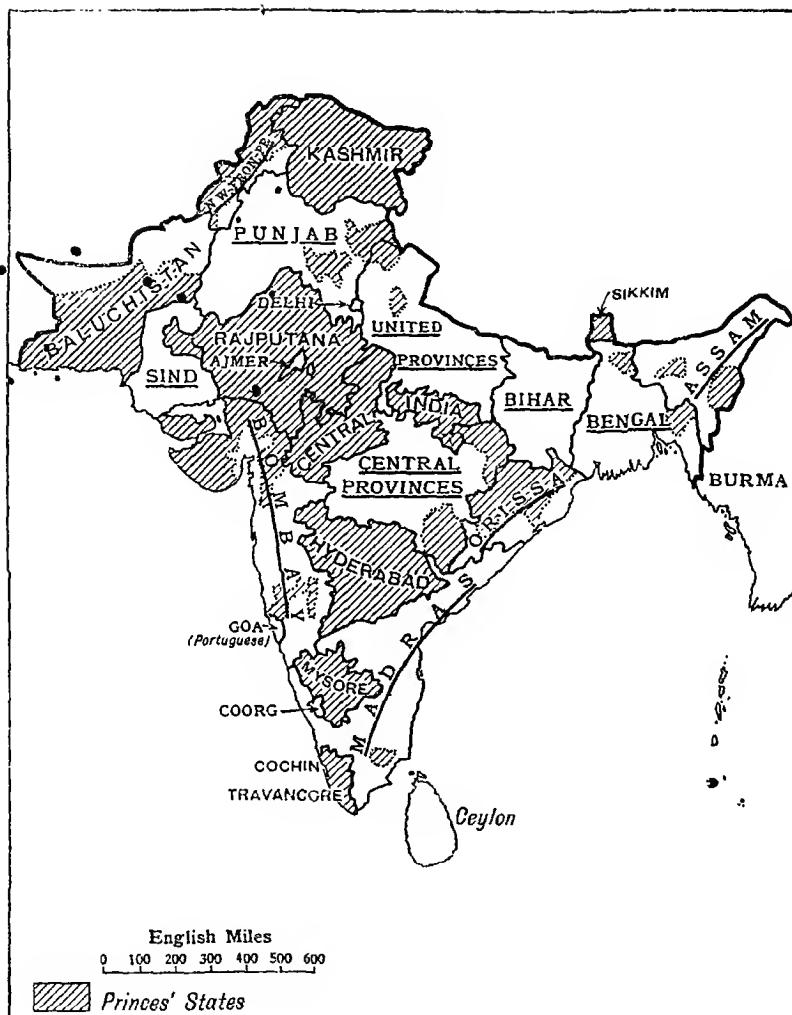
Mr M. K. Gandhi came to the fore at this time as the leader of the Congress party, from which the moderate reformers had withdrawn. After accepting the Act of 1919 he changed front and organized the non-co-operation movement, whose members refused to take part in the new councils or in any government services and were to boycott every manifestation of British presence in India. Gandhi's aim was to make government impossible by strictly peaceful means. But his followers did not keep the peace. They intimidated those who would not join their boycotts and strikes, and a good deal of bloodshed ensued. Gandhi had a genuine horror of violence, but did not face the fact that he could have stopped it by altering his policy. Meanwhile the Mahometans or Moslems were enraged at the mutilation of the Turkish Empire, whose Sultan was the head of their faith. Their Khilafat movement of protest added to the turmoil; but the Turks themselves knocked away its supports by deposing the Sultan and proclaiming a republic. The non-co-operation movement was checked by the imprisonment of Gandhi in 1922. India, tired of disorder, settled down to a period of uneasy peace.

While the extremists had been creating noise and disturbance the Act of 1919 had been working reasonably well, and moderate politicians had been gaining experience as members and ministers. According to a promise that the position should be reviewed after a training period, Sir John Simon made a report in 1930 in which he proposed an extension of responsible government. The Simon Report was well received but subsequently criticized, and the way to further advance was prepared by three Round Table Conferences held in 1930-32. Here the views of all parties were examined, including even those of the incalculable Gandhi, who, after inaugurating "mass civil disobedience" in 1930 and getting himself arrested for the violence which ensued, was released and came to London in

1931. His participation in the second Conference was not fruitful, for he was incapable of give-and-take negotiation. He insisted always on absolute compliance with his ideas, although they were somewhat inconstant and varied from time to time. On his return to India he tried to open a new campaign of disorder. This time he was more promptly imprisoned, and the movement subsided.

The government of India in these years had no easy task. It had a duty to the public in preserving it from disorder and intimidation; and the mass of the population hated being dragooned into processions, seditious assemblies and "days of mourning", on which no one was allowed to pursue his own avocations. On the other hand the government had to preserve the British tradition of political tolerance. And it could never forget that both itself and its denouncers were, in the ultimate, bent on the same purpose, the building of an Indian nation, free and self-governing. The difference between Government and Congress was a difference of method and wisdom; and which was wiser, the intelligent citizen must judge.

The Round Table Conferences issued in a new Government of India Act, passed in 1935. It undertook two distinct achievements, first the setting up in the provinces of fully responsible government based on a much larger electorate than hitherto, and second, the creation of a central government to represent a federation of all India, the princes' states as well as the British provinces. In this central government dyarchy would be retained, although many important branches of the administration were to be under responsible ministers. The provincial reform was comparatively simple. The federation was extremely difficult. The position of the princes was embodied in treaties made between them and the crown, at different times and on different terms. They could not be compelled to resign these treaties, but could only be asked to do so, and to join (irrevocably) in a federation with advanced politicians who had no love for them and would be likely to encroach on their rights. Obviously the drawing-in of all parties into this federation was a delicate business, and in fact after nine years it had not been done. The other part of the new constitution, responsible government and a fairly democratic franchise in the provinces, could be separately inaugurated, and was in 1937. After that date the new



The Princes' States are under hereditary rulers in treaty relation with the British government. The eleven provinces of British India with names underlined were granted responsible government by the Government of India Act, 1935.

provincial governments were at work, with the central government remaining as enacted in 1919.

Here it should be noted that Indian democracy has not taken the Western shape of a common franchise merging all voters in common constituencies irrespective of class and creed. In India this could not be done owing to the presence of caste distinctions and religious minorities, and the lack of any tradition of tolerance on the part of those in power. The Moslems form the greatest minority, but there are others. The seats in Indian legislatures are therefore allotted on a community basis, so many to this sect or class and so many to the other, and only the specially qualified voters choose the member for the constituency. This system was adopted in the reforms of 1909 and has since been continued. Without it, the minorities would be at a greater disadvantage than they now are.

The elections of 1937 gave the Congress Party the majority in several of the provinces, although not in the Punjab and Bengal, the two largest. The Congress party leaders then frustrated the working of responsible government by refusing to take office and so compelling the respective governors to choose ministers who did not enjoy the support of a majority. At first sight this refusal of the new liberties appears incomprehensible. But the men concerned had an obstructive mentality, more willing to score off opponents than to achieve success in concert with them. We may admit that from their point of view they had reason for bitterness without admitting that their point of view was justified. Afterwards the Congress party changed their decision and took office for a short spell. But they soon gave it up and went again into opposition.

This was the position at the outbreak of the second great war in 1939. Once again the mass of Indians showed how little the political hurly-burly affected their conception of British-Indian relations. When German victories in 1940 were threatening the life of the Empire and all it stood for, India took her stand with the defenders, for she knew on which side liberty was found. When Japan began her career of conquest in 1941 India felt no thrill of pride in the Asiatic advance; she realized that her own civilization was nearer to the Western than to the Japanese ideal. Her million soldiers of the first war became two millions in the second, and her industrial

war effort was beyond anything that would have seemed possible in the past.

Meanwhile it was desirable to get political controversies settled. By 1940 it was becoming clear that the federation outlined five years before would not be effected and that a new constitution must be devised. British policy now agreed that there should be full responsibility in the central government of India. The difficulty, as ever, was that Gandhi and the Congress Party claimed to be the voice of India, while many millions of Indians were positive that they were not. The Moslems were so resistant (like Ulster in the Home Rule controversy) to the prospect of subjection to a permanent Hindu majority that they proposed to carve off the areas with a large Moslem population and make them a separate state, to be called Pakistan. In 1942 Sir Stafford Cripps went to India to try to compose these differences. He failed, but left on record the British policy of recognizing the full self-government and dominion status of India as soon as Indians themselves should agree upon a constitution giving those principles effect. There it was left for the essential truth of democracy to gather strength, the truth that intolerance is barren and tolerance alone fruitful.

#### *8. The British Commonwealth*

After the first great war it became common to call the self-governing units of the Empire the British Commonwealth; and, by definition, that includes not only the dominions but the United Kingdom as well. In former times the disparity of population between the mother country and her daughter states was so great that it was impossible to think of them as in the same political category. But the disparity is now less great, and the mother-and-daughters conception is obsolete. The Commonwealth is an association of equals. The dominions have much less density of population than Great Britain and much greater area of land and wealth of natural endowment. As separate units they have less historical experience and accumulated knowledge of world affairs; but as members of the British family they inherit the lore of centuries. The combined dominion populations of European descent are now

about half those of the British Isles, omitting from either category the Southern Irish.

The history of the British Commonwealth has to be distinguished from that of its individual members. Some of them may conveniently be dealt with first.

In the politics of Great Britain the leaders of the post-war period were Lloyd George, Ramsay MacDonald and Stanley Baldwin, the last becoming head of the Conservative party on the death of Bonar Law and the retirement through age of Lord Balfour. The Lloyd George coalition made the peace of 1919 and broke up into its constituent parties in 1922. Before doing so it settled the Irish question, which had become acute by the end of the war. During the four years' suspension of political projects Ireland had become suspicious, not only of British intentions, but also of her own Nationalist party in Parliament under John Redmond. The extreme party, the Sinn Feiners, said that the Nationalists were subservient to the British. In fact they had declared their loyalty to the war effort and had accepted the suspension of Home Rule until peace should come. Altogether it was a reasonable attitude, but there were men in Ireland who desired no peaceful solution. These irreconcilables raised the Easter Rebellion in Dublin in 1916. It was a stab in the back, in view of the continental struggle, and when it failed at a lamentable cost in lives, some of the leaders were treated with a lenity which turned out to be misplaced. By the end of the war they had plunged large parts of Ireland into a condition of revolution. Their murders and atrocities on the unhappy loyalists cried for retribution. For a time it seemed that the ministry would act resolutely. But the Lloyd George coalition was very sensitive to its popularity, and England was in a mood to get this wretched business settled without too nice inquiry into its rights and wrongs. In 1921-2 the government made an agreement with the Sinn Fein leaders, recognizing the dominion status of southern and western Ireland under the name of the Irish Free State, with the same constitutional position as Canada. Ulster had already been organized as a separate self-governing unit, but the numerous southern loyalists were abandoned.

From 1923 to 1937 Stanley Baldwin and Ramsay MacDonald

alternated as prime ministers. MacDonald was the head of the Labour Party which now described itself as Socialist. It had attracted to itself the greater part of the votes that had gone to the Liberals, mainly on the score of their Radicalism, twenty years before. The Liberals, weakened by the schism between Lloyd George and Asquith, had sunk to the third position in party strength, and have steadily diminished thenceforward. There was, more than ever, work for a true Liberal Party in post-war England; but the existing holders of the title acted rather as semi-Socialists, and the voters of the Socialist persuasion naturally preferred the real thing. Genuine Liberalism made scarcely any appeal to the political public and seemed on the way to extinction.

Baldwin's Conservatism was in some respects nominal. The domestic policies which he promoted were not very different from those of MacDonald. Both engaged in lavish outlay on reforms and social services, kept taxation at levels suggestive of war expenditure, palliated the resulting unemployment by increasing doles, and allowed the armed forces to deteriorate while conniving at the doctrine that the League of Nations might be trusted as a substitute for national defence. The political leaders of the 1920's did not display courage. They knew, as every man knew who refused to deceive himself, that the way to post-war rehabilitation was by economy and self-denial and the putting-away of luxuries until they should have been earned by hard work replacing the wastage of four unprecedented years. But these truths were not popular, and they did not speak them. They believed that the British people would not face the facts, but would turn against anyone who stated them. In this they were wrong, for time has shown that with honourable leadership the people will rise to any demand. The people who had won victory in 1914-18 were ruled for so long by the Baldwin-MacDonald alternation, which ultimately became a combination, that they began in the 1930's to show signs of decadence. Fortunately it did not go too far.

On constitutional matters Mr Baldwin was much more to be trusted as a man of principle, as was shown in his firm handling of the General Strike of 1926. The coal miners had ceased work in resistance to a lowering of wages. A large body of opinion con-

sidered that they were hardly treated and gave them full sympathy. But some of the more important trade unions declared a simultaneous strike for the purpose of creating a crisis in the country's economic life and exerting pressure on the public and the government to intervene on behalf of the miners. This was in effect a revolutionary attempt to make the sectional trade unions a higher authority than the democratically elected Parliament and its responsible ministers. The Baldwin ministry refused to be coerced, and the majority of the people, with sure constitutional instinct, backed them. Volunteers kept the food supplies and transport services going, and the General Strike was broken. Considering that there was very general sympathy for the miners who were the occasion of the whole affair, the prompt public reaction against the General Strike must be accounted a victory for the democratic constitution, whose House of Commons had been elected less than two years previously.

For ten years after the war the fallacy that spending was not dependent on earning was implicit in the conduct of national affairs. In the United States at the same time there was an enormous increase in apparent wealth to the accompaniment of a somewhat similar doctrine. Americans in those years were saying that higher wages created more purchasing power and stimulated industry and production; and that money lent to foreign countries stimulated their purchases of the lenders' goods. Reasonably applied, there is truth in these propositions, but the American applications of them disregarded reason. For a period the results were almost miraculous, a boom in every kind of enterprise, increase of wealth, prosperity for all. Then in 1929, with complete suddenness, the boom broke down into the greatest slump in history, with financial ruin for the rich and the small investors, and mass unemployment for the poor. This American catastrophe is mentioned here because it was the forerunner, although not the cause, of a whole series of similar disasters in Great Britain, the dominions and Europe, and indeed in Latin America and all countries which bought and sold in world markets. The great depression that began in 1929 was a retribution for refusal to face the facts of 1919. Everyone had been pretending that they could have the most expensive war on record without paying for it.

In Great Britain the depression began in 1930 and next year overthrew the Labour government of Ramsay MacDonald. When national bankruptcy, that is, the inability of the state to meet its current debts, was imminent, owing to the stoppage of trade and fall in revenue, he proposed drastic cuts in expenditure. The majority of his colleagues refused to agree. With the minority he formed with Baldwin and the Conservatives and the few remaining Liberals a coalition or National government. This combination had sufficient authority to reduce expenditure and balance the budget, and also to enact protective duties for the preservation of British industry in a world wherein the general panic was flooding markets with goods at rubbish prices. The people were hard hit by the reduction in salaries, wages and doles, the higher prices resulting from the duties, and the conversion of the great War Loan from 5 per cent interest to 3½ per cent. Yet they saw the necessity for these steps and at the ensuing general election gave the National government an enormous majority. The Baldwin-MacDonald combination was momentarily courageous, and the country responded to the new leadership. Recovery was a slow business, but by the mid-thirties the cloud was lifting, and the economic prospect was improved.

At the same time the international prospect was darkening. The depression hit Germany in 1930. Its effect was to destroy the democratic republic existing since the war and to admit Hitler and his Nazis to power. Mussolini and his Fascists were already in possession of Italy owing to an economic collapse that had there supervened immediately on the war. Germany, Italy and Japan, for different reasons, entered upon a career of heavy armament and aggression on their neighbours. A series of arbitrary seizures of territory, contrary to right and justice, presaged a new period of war, and showed the futility of a League of Nations of which the pirates above-named were all members together with their victims. The British people, under the advice of those who should have known better (and some of whom did know better), had reduced its Navy, Army and Air Force in order to find money for the social reforms of the 'twenties. By 1933, when Hitler became ruler of Germany, the need for rearmament was urgent. The people did not want to face that need, and the ministry shirked putting it to them. In 1935 it

proposed an addition of only £10 millions to defence expenditure, and even this excited a good deal of protest. MacDonald retired and died in 1935, and Baldwin succeeded to the premiership. At the ensuing general election rearmament was not an issue. Attention was concentrated on pleasanter things, and the National government scored another majority. The indictment against ministers is that they knew the danger and did not speak out. Their defence is that they were servants of the popular will, which did not wish the question to be raised.

Neville Chamberlain succeeded Baldwin in 1937, and by that time the international peril could no longer be shirked. Predatory armies were already crashing through weak and well-intentioned states in Europe, Africa and Asia, and these armed robberies continued without intermission until 1939. The Chamberlain government did make a beginning with rearmament, and indeed made the citizen's liabilities for defence greater than they had ever been before in time of peace. But there was much to be done, and the Nazi preparations were incredibly swift. Chamberlain, although an improvement on his predecessors, did not succeed in rising to the need. The country was reconciled to rearmament, but did not realize the magnitude of the forces that threatened it. Six years sufficed to make Germany out of almost nothing a greater military power than she had ever been. It was scarcely credible, and the ministers and public hardly listened to the few men who, like Winston Churchill, assured them it was true. Chamberlain attempted the much-decried policy of appeasement, of trying to negotiate as with reasonable beings. In default of any adequate force, it is difficult to see what else he could do. If he had fought in 1938 instead of 1939 the chances of survival would have been smaller. And those who have mercilessly assailed him for gaining that year would (if they had lived) have reviled him for plunging unarmed into war, for playing Napoleon III to Hitler's Bismarck. No, the authors of England's weakness are to be sought earlier than that, and the test of Neville Chamberlain is not Munich but the use he made of the year it gained him.

In Canada, Australia and New Zealand the story of 1919-39 follows a similar pattern, ten years of optimism and unsoundly

based progress to 1929 ; then the great depression, generally worse than in Great Britain but nowhere so bad as in the United States; and finally an economic resurgence, slow but solid, coupled with the oncoming of another dark period of violence and war.

Canada's population grew from  $8\frac{3}{4}$  millions in 1921 to  $11\frac{1}{2}$  millions in 1941. Rather more than one million of this increase was due to immigration in the period before the great depression. British immigrants formed the most numerous group, but the others, including Americans, Ukrainians and Scandinavians, together out-

#### THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

##### White Populations in the Twentieth Century (in millions)

	1901	1921	1941	1951	1961
Total white subjects of the Crown	$53\frac{1}{2}$	$64\frac{1}{2}$	$73^*$		
Great Britain and Ireland . . .	$42\frac{1}{2}$	48	$50\frac{1}{2}^*$		
Dominions total . . .	11	$17\frac{1}{2}$	$22\frac{1}{2}$		
Canada . . . .	$5\frac{1}{2}$	$8\frac{1}{2}$	$11\frac{1}{2}$		
Australia . . . .	$3\frac{1}{2}$	$5\frac{1}{2}$	7		
South Africa . . . .	1	$1\frac{1}{2}$	2		
New Zealand . . . .	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$		
Newfoundland . . . .	$1\frac{1}{4}$	$1\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		

\* Includes 3 million inhabitants of Southern Ireland.

numbered them. The French Canadian element increased at a more rapid rate than the others, and by 1941 numbered well over 3 millions. Before the depression agriculture and the wheat export were the most important economic interest of the Dominion. After it manufacturing took first place, with mining and forestry growing ever more important. Canada, like other agricultural countries, deliberately fostered her industries. Such countries are attracted by the stability arising from a local balance between food-growing and manufacture, a very real advantage when the world balance is in a precarious condition as it has been ever since the war of 1914. The emergence of these local balances is not of good omen for the people of Great Britain, with their large preponderance of

manufacture over food production; for they must export their manufactures in order to purchase food.

Newfoundland, the ancient colony, was harder hit by the depression than any other dominion, and her experience illustrates the disadvantage of relying on primary products without manufactures. For the world collapse of finance and purchasing power heavily decreased the demand for Newfoundland's fish and timber. Her governments had also been reckless in raising loans carrying interest beyond the country's ability to pay. The result was bankruptcy in 1933, not threatened, but actual. But the British Commonwealth is a family which maintains the family credit. Great Britain and Canada gave assistance. An investigation showed that some Newfoundland ministers had not been public servants of the highest type. The Newfoundland Parliament itself asked the Crown to take over the government, and in 1934 the country temporarily resigned its dominion status and came under the rule of the governor and a commission appointed by the Dominions Office in London. Meanwhile Great Britain paid as much of the interest on the debt as Newfoundland was unable to raise. This arrangement was to continue until solvency was restored.

There was a small British emigration to Australia and New Zealand after 1918, but it ceased with the onset of the depression. Australian manufactures had long been carried on behind a high fence of protective duties with the object of raising the standard of living of the urban workers. These did not wish to encourage the immigration of townsmen like themselves, and the newcomers whom Australia welcomed were those who would work on the land, the class of whom Great Britain had by this time few to spare. Two national interests conflicted in Australia: the desire of Labour to keep the country's resources in the possession of a small select population with a very high standard of living; and the need for much greater numbers in order to provide military defence against the Japanese or other prospective aggressors. It was a local variation of the conflict between self-denial and self-indulgence which faced the British democracy in the same period. Although the urban and rural populations in Australia were fairly equal, the primary or unmanufactured products formed the bulk of the exports. As every-

where, the depression of the early 'thirties lessened the demand for them, and an economic crisis arose. For a time it looked as though Australia, which had borrowed heavily to finance state undertakings, might fall into bankruptcy. One prominent politician urged repudiation of debts. But public opinion was against him, and under sound leadership Australia came creditably through the crisis. As everywhere else, the further pattern of the 'thirties was that of slowly returning prosperity overshadowed by the deepening clouds of war.

New Zealand, with a much slighter urban and industrial interest, had a rural economy closely linked with the fortunes of industrial England. New Zealand's prosperity had grown with the growth of the British Isles in population and standard of living, for she supplied the mutton and dairy produce that were on sale in every British town and village. With the twentieth century the rate of increase of the home population was slowed, although, as its expenditure on foodstuffs increased, New Zealand was not conscious of changed conditions. But the depression of the 'thirties caused a sudden fall in demand, and a still greater fall in the prices obtainable for what was consumed. New Zealand had a bad time, but her finances were sound and she came through with less disturbance than might have been expected.

The economics of South Africa, hinged upon the gold mines of the Rand and the presence of a large native African population, have taken a different course and have sometimes been overshadowed by the politics resulting from the two different nationalities in the white population. The story is best outlined from the political point of view. General Botha, the man who had made the South African Union and had done his utmost to end old grudges and jealousies, died immediately after his return from the Versailles peace conference in 1919. His successor was General Jan Smuts who, as he said in 1920, stood for "the twin cause of the British Empire and racial peace and unity in South Africa". Against him stood General Hertzog at the head of those Afrikaners (i.e. Europeans of Dutch descent) who still desired to secede from the Empire and set up a republic. The Labour party, strongest on the Rand, was neutral in the political dispute and devoted itself to raising and protecting the white workers' standard of living. The division between the

Smuts and Hertzog parties was not a British versus Bôer division, for Smuts had many supporters of Afrikaner blood. It was a barren perpetuation of controversies that time had really ~~all~~<sup>all</sup>led. All white South Africa now enjoyed a common democratic liberty; dominion status meant national freedom to choose any course; and there is little point in asserting an independence that already exists. The really urgent question that dominated the future of South Africa was that of the native population, four times as great as the European, doing all the unskilled labour, living at the lowest possible standards, overcrowded in town slums or in tribal reserves, presenting a growing menace of disease and destitution. How was it to be harmonized with a white society in a decent way of life?

Smuts ruled until 1924, his chief problems being those of white and black labour and strikes on the Rand. His party then fell before a coalition of Labour and the Republicans, and Hertzog came into power under pledge to his Labour allies not to raise the question of secession. In practice he also had to devote himself to economic and native matters. His proclaimed policy was that of segregation of the races, that is, white and black societies to coexist in the same country, separated in habitation and employment, and under different methods of government. This held out a bleak prospect for the Africans, who were to be protected, not enfranchised; but it was largely incapable of being carried out, since employment already commingled the races in one society. The discussion of these somewhat dreary questions was enlivened from time to time by the resurrection of national rivalries by the Republicans. One of these was the flag controversy of 1926, which resulted after much heat in the design of a new South African flag with a very small Union Jack embodied in it. There was in the earlier years of the Union a real misunderstanding of the status of a British Commonwealth dominion, and a fear that South Africa was still in some manner subject to Downing Street control. This error was cleared up by the definition of the Commonwealth relation achieved after the first great war, very largely by South African initiative. The world-wide economic crisis produced in South Africa a coalition government. Smuts and his party served with Hertzog, who remained prime minister until 1939, a tenure of fifteen years.

The Commonwealth constitution developed markedly during the first great war, and this development was covered by a redefinition arrived at in the post-war period. For a hundred years now, since the days when Lord Durham prepared the way for responsible government, the British overseas have steadily increased their control over every branch of their own affairs, until by the second great war the process may be regarded as complete. From the time when responsible government was well established, say from 1870, there have also been attempts to devise a plan of co-operation by which all the free units shall act together. Very little formal plan has come out of these attempts, and the result is that co-operation, generally supported, energetic in its prosecution, and weighty in its results, exists without any written code of undertakings to warrant it. The written constitution of the British Commonwealth is mainly negative. The positive part is unwritten, and by British ways of thinking all the more binding. This has been a puzzle to foreigners who know none but written constitutions; and it has been especially unfair to the poor German, who has twice had sprung upon him the might of an Empire which he had conclusively proved not to exist.

Before the war of 1914 the dominions were self-governing in all their internal affairs, but the foreign affairs of the whole Empire were conducted by the British government in London. Even a transaction in which a single dominion had an almost exclusive interest might be settled by a negotiation in which Great Britain took the leading part and the dominion itself a small one. An example was the fixing of the Alaska boundary between Canada and the United States in 1904, when Canada was bound by a decision from which she herself dissented. When the King, on the advice of his British ministers, went to war with Germany in 1914, the dominions were also at war without any discussion on their part. It was a decision which on this occasion they entirely approved and backed with all their strength; but it did illustrate the fact that the control of foreign policy was a practical matter involving tremendous consequences, and that it was not in their hands.

A sense of distinct nationhood had long been growing up in the dominions. It was not founded on literary fancies or historical

ruminations but on existing facts. For environment does shape mankind, and those who live in Canada become nationally distinct from those who live in Australia, and both are different from the people of the British Isles. This would be true even if all were of the same ancestry, while in fact only half the Canadians and less than half of the white South Africans are of British origin, although almost all the Australians and New Zealanders are. During the first war the dominions fought on the great scale and suffered casualties almost identical in percentage of population with those of the mother country. They revealed themselves as nations indeed, small as numbers go, but of quality unsurpassed. While the war was still in progress the Imperial Conference met in 1917 and 1918. It decided that after the war a special constitutional conference should meet to devise means for closer and more effective consultation between the great units of the Empire and for the dominions to share in the conduct of foreign policy, while at the same time preserving all the independence of action which they already enjoyed.

This projected constitutional conference was never held, for the events that ended the war anticipated some of the decisions it would have needed to make. The members of the Imperial Conference attended the peace negotiations at Versailles in 1919. The dominions (except Newfoundland) signed the peace treaties as separate belligerents and joined the League of Nations with the same status as its other members. Their national completeness and capacity for independent action were thus recognized and they had taken their share in one of the highest acts of foreign policy.

The provision of means for more effective consultation formed the remainder of the constitutional agenda. But with peace the need for discussing it seemed less urgent, and all the governments were occupied with pressing domestic affairs. Moreover, any new departure would involve the creation of some formal mechanism with binding rules, and that would inevitably trespass upon full national independence. So, very wisely, nothing was done, and in course of time the problem solved itself. The material developments of telephony, radio speech and air transport brought all concerned into closer contact and rendered possible a practically continuous

consultation without any new constitutional mechanism. That point was well made by Mr Mackenzie King, the prime minister of Canada, in a speech to the two houses of the Parliament of the United Kingdom in May 1944. By the end of the first great war the self-governing Empire had become the British Commonwealth of independent nations linked by spiritual ties, some of blood, some of tradition, some of association, some of a common view of human purpose, all its members free to do as they thought fit, all using their freedom to co-operate without any compulsion in common purposes. To some minds the whole thing looked like a sham, a ghost of a power that had departed. To others it appeared the strongest combination that human politics have produced; for its entity was spiritual rather than material, and a spirit is hard to kill. Was it spirit or ghost? The future was to answer.

For practical purposes the British Commonwealth took its shape in 1919. There had been no law to shape it; events had done so, and the resulting practice was agreed. In the British view established practice is a higher expression of constitutional liberties than a formal statute, for practice is flexible and more readily allows modification with the growth of opinion. There were, however, in the Commonwealth, notably in South Africa and in Canada, men of a different habit of mind who preferred the written document and were uneasy without it. To meet their desires the constitution was in one of its aspects defined and rounded off by two formal transactions. The Imperial Conference of 1926 resolved that the members of the British Commonwealth were freely associated, equal in status, not subordinate to one another, and united by their common allegiance to the crown. This gave great satisfaction in South Africa, where Hertzog told his Republican following that it recognized the right of the dominion to secede from the Empire. He felt bound to add also that to act upon the right would be a very different matter since it would split the country and cause a disastrous internal conflict. From that time onwards secession was a dead issue except among the few irresponsibles who are to be found in any community.

The resolutions of the Imperial Conference are not laws, and have constitutional but not legal force. The legalists still wanted

something more to place on record their complete national independence. The Imperial Conference of 1930 prepared the ground, and the result was the Statute of Westminster (1931), the second of the formal transactions above referred to. By this Act of the British Parliament Great Britain formally resigned certain rights of interference with dominion legislation and of legislating for the dominions over their heads. The chief of the rights resigned were embodied in the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865, and in parts of some later measures. They had not in practice been acted upon for a long time. In general it may be said that the Statute of Westminster introduced no new principles into the Commonwealth constitution. It merely registered and ratified those that had already been evolved in the passage of time. In doing so it made it legally clear that a dominion Parliament enjoys complete and unfettered rights of legislation for its own citizens. The Statute met the wishes of Canada, South Africa and the Irish Free State. It was not desired by Australia and New Zealand and was not formally adopted by them.

While the constitutional question was being rounded off, the economic development of the Empire was in active progress. As we have seen, none of the pre-1914 general elections in Great Britain had resulted in a majority for Joseph Chamberlain's plan of preferential trade. The position was that the dominions gave British goods a preference over those of foreigners, but Great Britain treated all imports alike. Free traders answered the argument that this was ungenerous by pointing to the preponderantly British share in paying for the Navy and some other imperial services. During the first great war the Imperial Conference of 1917 unanimously passed a resolution in favour of imperial preference. This was the first time a British ministry had agreed to the principle. There was not much result in practice and the Imperial Conference of 1923 again took up the matter. This time all the prime minister present promised to recommend to their respective countries the adoption of a regular system of preferential trade. In England this meant a general election to place the issue before the people. M. Baldwin, who took the step, was defeated and succeeded by M. MacDonald. Baldwin regained power in the following year but without a mandate for thorough-going preference. By this time

however, a limited measure of preference was being granted by Great Britain, not by taxing the foods and raw materials that came from foreign countries, but by giving the Empire lower rates on articles that were dutiable in any case, such as tobacco and wines. These Empire products had been insignificant in Chamberlain's time, but in the 1920's under the preferential stimulus a great trade in Empire tobacco came into being, and more Empire than foreign tobacco was being consumed in the British market.

The great depression of 1929-31 had the effect of introducing complete imperial preference. When the British government in 1931 adopted general protection in place of free trade the way was at length clear for general preferences to the dominions. An Imperial Conference on economic matters was held at Ottawa in 1932. There it was agreed to put in operation a thorough system of mutual preferences with a view to re-establishing within the Empire an area of stabilized trade conditions in a world in which trade in general had become chaotic. The Ottawa agreements were to be open to revision after five years. At the end of that time an Imperial Conference (1937) met in London. Already Great Britain and other members of the Commonwealth were finding that a too exclusive system was not desirable and that efforts must be made to revive trade with foreign countries. This was the general trend of policy from 1937, but such interests were thenceforward rapidly engulfed in the rising clouds of the second great war.

And so, by 1939, the few good days were over and it was time to go to war again. What an experience lies in the memory of an elderly man to-day, a man born, say, in the 1880's! He is conscious, more than any of his forbears can have been, of having lived in periods that are now finished and belong to history. The map of Europe which impressed itself on his growing mind was almost monopolized by the great powers, whose territories looked so rounded-off and stable that it was hard to conceive of their dissolution. In his early years the more noisy and discomforting effects of the industrial revolution were limited to certain areas, and only its beneficent consequences were spread wide over the country. Mechanism had not reached its present stature, and was evident to most people only on the railways. He may have heard talk of a "horseless

carriage" to be seen with other marvels at the Crystal Palace, and have heard some sceptic say that it was another lie like the flying machine. He grew up in an atmosphere of freedom and prosperity, when living was cheap, men were hopeful, and wars little and distant. The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in the blazing summer of 1897 gives tone in retrospect to all that decade. The 'nineties were a sunny time to those who lived on the surface and did not think too deeply.

They ended with the South African War, and the new century opened with the Queen's death. The nineteen-hundreds were not so easy. The giants of politics were dead (Gladstone in 1898, Salisbury, in 1903), and their successors were second-raters of their quality or first-raters of a much lower quality. Political practice deteriorated, and the domestic future was insecure. Yet, by comparison with what was to come, the time was good. In spite of rising taxation and state expenditure the pound would still buy fifteen shillings worth of late-Victorian value. The real shadow of the Edwardian age was Germany and war; and it mounted and blackened.

On August 4, 1914, the "century of hope" ended, the century since the last universal despot had fallen to British leadership at Waterloo. For that hundred years Western civilization had gone forward or had not irrevocably gone back. But now it had gone back. The retrogression was moral as well as material. Surveying those post-war years one is struck by the poor quality of leadership, the fatal facility with which men in office uttered insincere catch-words that they themselves half-knew to be false. Peace was restored to a broken world in 1918. For twenty years civilization stumbled on, voices saying that all would be well, actions belying them, until the same felon hand dealt it a second blow. This blow has inflicted infinitely greater damage than the first, moral as well as material. In continental Europe it will henceforward be less easy even to talk hopefully or to look with anything but savage cynicism on such a project as the League of Nations in some new guise. There is the work facing the British Commonwealth and the others who have been relatively fortunate in this war. Western man must be re-civilized, or humanity plunges into night without end.

It will be done in the main by example, by hard work and self-

denial, by faith and moderation and good temper. Not by following the phantoms of what man ought to be but is not, or indulging in dishonest spending unwarranted by earning and saving. Our backward-looking observer sees clearly that a period of history ended in 1914. He cannot be sure that another ends in 1944. The answer to that rests with the energetic young, the answer to the question, Has your twentieth century touched bottom?

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